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THE RUNAWAY;

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OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

A NOVEL.

2

1263

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MR. SMITH.

Somers, whom misfortunes had humbled till fate could not awe nor death dismay, stood calm as a Christian in the crash of worlds.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR CROSBY AND LETTERMAN,

STATIONERS'-COURT, LUDGATE-STREET.

1800.

[T. Davison, White-Friars.]

THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

CHAP. I.

AFTER Sir Thomas had left the company of Somers, he retired to his own houfe.

Every object he beheld reminded him of Sophia; he recalled to his memory the many happy hours he had there fpent with her, during the life of his mother; and then took a rapid view of the occurrences which had taken place fince that period, and by comparing them he found

that no real enjoyment was to be attained by a life of diſſipation.

He ruminated on the words that fell from Somers, that he ſhould never again obtain her, but by marriage. He had now no means whatever by which he could wreſt her from his protection, unleſs it were by marriage, and this his pride would not ſuffer him to adopt.

Aggravated and fretful, he retired to his bed, and there paſſed a ſleepleſs night.

He aroſe in the morning diſordered with an head-ache for want of reſt, and his heart throbbing through the recollection of the preſent circumſtances.

To eaſe this torture of mind, he again peruſed the few lines that Sophia had written with the pencil, and diſſected every word of it.

The first word "Farewel," made his heart sink within him, and he dreaded lest the event had already taken place. He next proceeded, "dear to my heart, but detestable to my recollection!"—"Ah, my God!" cried he, "what a lively affection must she possess, that not all the cruelties of my conduct could obliterate it! 'Fear nothing from me:' here," said he, "is another instance of her regard; she was unwilling that I should have a moment of uneasiness on her account, and therefore removes it by this assurance: how many wretched moments have I occasioned her, and yet thus she amiably returns it!" He next read, "I can die, but cannot seek revenge." "I have been credibly informed," said he, "that she is seriously ill; am I then to murder the object that I love?—

the object that would die sooner than she would give me offence, or bring upon me the punishment I deserve? And yet to marry her, what would the world think of such an act! Oh, Somers," exclaimed he, "you have a heart destitute of feeling, or you would not thus delight in torturing a fellow creature. But I see how it is, he wishes to be revenged on me for my conduct to Miss Lesley: and yet," continued he, "that cannot be the case; he has it in his power to punish me effectually, and still he contents himself by demanding an annuity for her, or to resign her to me on honourable terms."

In this manner he reasoned with himself, his pride combating with his affection alternately, during the chief part of the day; at length he came to a determination

mination of again waiting upon Somers.

In the mean time Somers reflected on what Sir Thomas had utterred; he ſaw clearly there was an unalterable attachment on his ſide, and therefore took an opportunity of ſpeaking with Sophia when there was no one elſe preſent.

Somers recapitulated to her the propoſitions he had made to Sir Thomas.

"Do not inſiſt upon any thing for me," ſaid Sophia; "I cannot endure the thought of it; nor would it render me a ſervice.

"A few weeks will end my ſorrows here; do not, therefore, during the ſmall ſpace of time I have to live, force me to turn my ſhame into the means of profit.

"I ſhould be happy," continued ſhe, "if Sir Thomas would reſtore to my

father what he has deprived him of; that would only be an act of juſtice; but as to myſelf, there is no compenſation he can give that will reſtore peace to my mind."

"If," ſaid Somers, "Sir Thomas ſhould aſk your hand in marriage, would you agree to his requeſt?"

Sophia heaved a heavy ſigh. "That he will never do," reſumed ſhe: "I once fondly hoped his affection was pure; but he has fatally convinced me of my error."

"I doubt," rejoined Somers, "whether he has not a ſincere regard for you; his conduct is the reſult of a depravity mingled with pride and affection; nor ſhould I be ſurpriſed on hearing ſuch a propoſal from him."

"Mr. Somers," ſaid Sophia, "I can ſay that to you, which I cannot to my

father,

father, who ſuffers himſelf to be governed by paſſion and inveterate hatred. If Sir Thomas ſhould make ſuch a propoſal, and you ſhould be convinced it originates through a repentance for the paſt, and a ſincere regard for me, I ſhould think myſelf highly culpable in refuſing him; but if it have its origin in fear, not all the affection I ever muſt poſſeſs, nor the advice of my deareſt friends, will compel me to accept him."

This converſation was interrupted by the entrance of Sir Thomas; he had paſſed the ſervants, and approached towards the ſitting-room, having obſerved Bridport walking in the garden at a diſtance, and therefore had no fear on his account.

When he entered the room he ran and

caught her in his arms, "No power on earth," ſaid he, "ſhall ever part us more."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Sophia, and ſunk upon a chair, almoſt fainting.

"Why this intruſion?" cried Somers. "Miſs Bridport is under my protection; nor will I ſubmit to her being inſulted by your preſence;" then ringing the bell, a ſervant attended—"Deſire Mr. Bridport and Theodore to come to my aſſiſtance."

Theodore, on hearing his name mentioned, entered the room.

"For Heaven's ſake," cried Sir Thomas, "do not call Bridport, but firſt hear what I have to ſay."

"I can attend to nothing while Miſs Bridport is in the room," replied Somers; "what you have to ſay may poſſibly be unfit

unfit for her to hear, and I will not ſuffer any inſult to be offered her."

"I informed you laſt night," reſumed Sir Thomas, "I could not live without her; therefore name your terms; and if I can, conſiſtent with the reſpect I owe my family, agree to them I will."

"Terms!" cried Somers indignantly; "what terms can ſhe attend to with honour, but thoſe of marriage? but you are led away by a falſe pride: you talk of the reſpect due to your family; if you had ſtudied that, you would not have done an act to bring diſgrace upon it; nor would you heſitate to make a reparation for the injury you have done.

"Sophia has it in her power to attach eternal infamy on your name; but, prompted by affection, refuſes ſo to do: yes, that amiable girl, now ſinking into

the grave, a monument of your cruelty, is mindful of your honour; blush when you consider how unmindful in return you are of her's. But I will estimate this mighty condescension:--You are a baronet; her grandfather on one side was a beneficed clergyman, on the other an officer in the army. Is there any disgrace in being allied to a person thus respectably descended?

" She has received a brilliant education, and would adorn a court; what more can you desire, except it be unbounded affection? and has she not this in its fullest extent? You declare you have an affection for her; would you wish to consult your own happiness, by rendering miserable the object that you love? Behold that form, once an assemblage of beauty, but now, through your mon-

strous

ftrous vices, nearly reduced to the grave!

"Think, if fhe is not timely faved, what muft be your reflections."

"Say no more," cried Sir Thomas, "but plead with her in my behalf; I feel afhamed of what is paft; if marriage can atone, I inftantly agree to it."

"What am I to fay?" refumed Somers, addreffing himfelf to Sophia; "will you accept of Sir Thomas, who thus repents, and offers the only atonement you can accept?"

Sophia could make no reply, her heart was too full for utterance.

"You muft permit her to retire," continued Somers; "and reft affured the ftrong affection fhe entertains will compel her to accept your offer."

"Can you," cried Sir Thomas as he

attended her to the door, "can you forgive the paſt, and conſent to ſhare my name and fortune?"

Sophia turned her eyes upon him that were flowing with tears, yet betokened reconciliation; and preſſing his hand, left the room.

"Now, Sir Thomas," cried Somers, advancing towards him, and taking hold of his hand, "you have conſented to the only act that could reconcile me to you: be aſſured the plan you have adopted will yield you more ſolid happineſs, than any other you could have purſued."

"I feel the truth of your aſſertion," replied Sir Thomas, "and bluſh that I did not ſooner put it in practice:" then turning to Theodore, "It gives me great pleaſure," ſaid he, "to find you here; it was through my means you were neceſ-

ſitated

ſtated to quit this place; is there any apology I can make that will atone for my conduct to you?"

"I aſſure you," replied Theodore, "your promiſe to Miſs Bridport has placed you ſo high in my eſtimation, there needs no apology from you to me for what is paſt; I therefore requeſt it may be conſigned to oblivion."

"Theodore," ſaid Sir Thomas, "I ſincerely thank you; and, perhaps, in token of our reconciliation, you will do me the favour to ſpend a part of your time at my houſe; I ſhall be proud of your company."

Theodore aſſured him he would do himſelf the honour.

Somers now requeſted Sir Thomas would withdraw without ſeeing Bridport. "He is rather inveterate," ſaid he; "you

muſt

muſt plead in his excuſe the feelings of a parent: if he were to ſee you at this time, very poſſibly ſome unpleaſant words might paſs between you."

Sir Thomas agreed to the propoſal; and, promiſing to call again on the following morning, departed.

Somers now ſought out Bridport, for the purpoſe of relating what had paſſed.

Bridport was in company with his daughter; and having obſerved her tears, which were ſtill viſible, and concluding affection for Sir Thomas to be the cauſe, was harſhly reproving her for her weakneſs, and beſtowing a variety of invectives againſt him.

When Somers entered, "Here," cried Bridport, "is an obſtinate girl, that is ſtill repining for a villain whom ſhe ought to deſpiſe!"

"Hold,"

"Hold," rejoined Somers, "let these invectives cease: I have seen Sir Thomas; he has commissioned me to request you will consent to his union with your daughter; she will shortly become Lady Blandford."

"Never," replied Bridport hastily. "I will labour for her night and day before I will consent to her being allied to such a monster.—Does he think to palliate his crime, and foil my resentment, by these means? if he does, he will find himself wonderously disappointed!"

"I can have no motive," rejoined Somers, "in advising you, but what arises from friendship to both you and your daughter; I therefore request you will seriously and dispassionately consider of the proposal, before you give it your final negative. Sir Thomas repents having conducted

himſelf towards you as he has done, and is ready to make the greateſt reparation in his power: at the ſame time his offer plainly evinces the affection he has for your daughter; which affection is as fully returned on her ſide; it will therefore be cruel to withhold your conſent, and permit me to add that I think, under all the circumſtances, would be highly unjuſt."

"You never was treated as I have been," reſumed Bridport; "and therefore know not how you would act if you were in my ſituation.

"You perhaps know not what it is to be a father, and therefore cannot eſtimate my feelings; can I ever take him by the hand after what is paſt? can I ever eſteem him, ſeeing he ſo juſtly merits my reſentment? I ſhould, indeed, be ſorry, after the many favours I have received

from

from you, to gain your disapprobation by any conduct of mine, or by any thing I may advance, yet I cannot help remarking; you carry your humanity and forgiveness too far; the only excuse I can make for it is, that you as a man can overlook, what I as a father neither can or will."

"You force me," resumed Somers, "to speak more plainly than I intended. I am of opinion, that the voice of a father in this case ought not to interrupt the union; in fact, I think it infamous to attempt it."

"Ah, by Heaven," exclaimed Bridport, "if she dares to take him, she shall take may eternal curse with her!"

Sophia caught hold of her father's hand, while she bedewed it with her tears,

tears, and entreated him to recal that fatal ſentence.

Bridport was deaf to her petition.

Somers requeſted Sophia to leave the room for a few minutes; as ſoon as ſhe had retired, "I ſtand amazed," ſaid Somers, "at the depravity of human nature; your conduct appears to me in a worſe light than the former conduct of Sir Thomas: he had the ſtrong and almoſt ungovernable paſſions of youth to plead in paliation of his offence; but what have you to plead, ſeeing he repents, and offers all within his power as an atonement?

"You ſeem determined to ſacrifice your daughter's future peace, if not her life, merely to perpetuate an inveterate and unchriſtian-like hate."

"My daughter," rejoined Bridport,

"will

"will ſoon forget him, and will be much happier in a ſubordinate ſituation, than ſhe can ever expect to be with a man of his libertine principles: you will oblige me by not ſaying any thing further on the ſubject at preſent."

"I will leave you," rejoined Somers, "to think of it, and I truſt your good ſenſe will teach you to conquer this unmanly and ill-timed revenge, the conſequences of which muſt prove fatal to both the peace of your daughter and yourſelf."

CHAP. II.

SOMERS having left Bridport to ruminate on what had paffed, retired to a private apartment.

An idea fuggefted itfelf, whereby he hoped to do away the refentment of Bridport, which was, to pourtray the confequences that muft attend his acting in this inveterate manner.

He therefore fat down and compofed a ballad for the purpofe of giving it him, if he fhould continue to withhold his confent.

On the following morning he met him in the pleafure-ground, and again refumed the fubject; but all he could utter had no effect on him.

When

When they reached the breakfaſt parlor, Sophia was there, but ſo much altered for the worſe, as to alarm every one preſent.

Somers obſerved Bridport during breakfaſt viewing her attentively, and thought he heard a ſigh eſcape him; as ſoon, therefore, as ſhe had quitted the room, he determined to produce the lines he had written.

Although Somers had no merit as a poet, yet he conſidered they contained a ſubject which would touch his feelings.

"Here is an old ballad," ſaid he, "will you do me the favour to read it?"

Bridport took it; but not having his ſpectacles about him, he requeſted Theodore would oblige him by repeating it.

Theodore read as follows:

FAR on the weſtern borders bound,
Near yon ſtupendous hills,
Where flocks adorn the verdant ground,
And pleaſing murm'ring rills,

Lies Blandford vale, from breeze ſerene,
With nature's riches ſtored:
A manſion grac'd the lovely ſcene,
And own'd Rinaldo lord.

Rinaldo young, gay, proud, and vain,
In nature's gifts array'd,
Poſſeſs'd this rich, this wide domain,
And towns that round him laid.

Nurtur'd in pride, he ſcorn'd the lot
Of thoſe who, bleſt with health,
Toil'd daily in their fields or cot,
T'increaſe his fund of wealth.

Amidſt the tenantry's wide hoſt
That clos'd the diſtant ſcene;
'Midſt hills that in the clouds are loſt,
And groves that intervene;

Stood

Stood Damon's cot, from breeze fecure
His barns with plenty ftor'd,
His wicket open to the poor,
And welcome at his board.

One only daughter Damon had,
Seléna was her name;
With virtue was the damfel clad,
And fpotlefs was her fame.

Fair as a lily was the maid,
As fair as fhe was pure;
Save when a virtuous blufh betray'd
Her lot ;'have been obfcure.

Selena's beauty foon was taught
To reach Rinaldo's ear;
Beauty furpaffing human thought,
Excelling far and near.

Rinaldo lift'ned to the tale,
Which fcarce believing true,
He taught his fteps to tread the vale
That gave the breath fhe drew.

Entranc'd

Entranc'd with wonder he beheld
Of Blandford's vale the pride,
And vow'd he was by love compell'd
To take her as his bride.

Selena view'd with trembling awe
The proftrate noble youth ;
And heard him vow the marriage law
Should feal his love and truth.

Full foon fhe felt what 'twas to love,
And, what fhe felt confeft ;
While he call'd Heav'n and Earth to prove
How truly he was bleft.

Happy had been Rinaldo's lot:
But that, poffeffing pride,
He could not ftoop, from Damon's cot
To take Rinaldo's bride.

Far diff'rent means he now purfu'd,
Selena to obtain :
She yet continu'd unfubdu'd,
And all his arts were vain.

One

One eve far winding in a wood
  Th' enamour'd couple ſtray'd;
Rinaldo vow'd his paſſion could
  No longer be delay'd;

Then claſp'd Selena to his heart:
  Selena trembling ſu'd:
She whom he ne'er could gain by art
  Was ſoon by force ſubdu'd.

Ah me! what tortures rent her breaſt,
  By ſad reflection's aid!
By him who thus her heart poſſeſs'd—
  By him to be betray'd!

"Alas! my father," then ſhe cry'd,
  "To thee I'll quickly fly;
In thy fond arms my ſorrows hide,
  And learn the way to die."

Rinaldo now Selena view'd—
  E'en lovely in diſtreſs—
His vows of conſtancy renew'd,
  To make his crime the leſs.

" Think not," cry'd he, " that we will part,
This act has made me thine;
And, by the love that ſways my heart,
Thou ſhalt be only mine."

Then, ſwift as thought, he quick convey'd
The tearful, ſtruggling fair;
In vain ſhe cry'd, in vain ſhe pray'd,
'Twas praying to the air.

Safe lodg'd beneath his manſion's dome:
" This houſe, my love," cry'd he,
" Shall be your priſon, or your own,
As you ſubmit to me."

Sad was the tale the ev'ning brought
To wetched Damon's ear;
And newly was this parent taught
To ſhed a parent's tear.

With haſty ſtrides he croſs'd the vale,
To claim his ruin'd child;
But paſſion choak'd the heavy tale
While he his lord revil'd.

Unus'd to bear a tenant's ſcorn,
Rinaldo frets with rage;
From houſe and land was Damon torn,
And left to want in age.

But Damon ſoon, with matchleſs art,
Beguil'd the wary lord!
And claſpt Selena to his heart—
His child again reſtor'd.

Again Rinaldo frets with rage;
But rage was now in vain;
And love far diff'rent thoughts engage
To eaſe his heart-felt pain.

" Ah! what avail theſe wide domains,
Since dear Selena's loſt?
All now appear as deſert plains,
Since thus my hopes are croſt.

Then welcome love, and farewel pride,
Selena ſhall be mine;
Selena as Rinaldo's bride,
In Britiſh courts ſhall ſhine."

Then

Then quickly fled th'enamour'd lord
To Damon's humble cot,
Explain'd his wiſh, his ſuit preferr'd,
And ſhew'd the prieſt he brought.

But Damon ſtill with paſſion burn'd,
Refus'd to hear his pray'r;
And from his door Rinaldo ſpurn'd—
Rinaldo, Blandford's heir.

With trembling ſteps, and bended knee,
Selena next implor'd;
"Alas! my father, let me be
To Blandford's lord reſtor'd."

"Avaunt!" the cruel father cry'd,
"Nor this ſame plaint rehearſe;
If thou wilt be Rinaldo's bride,
Take him—but take my curſe!"

With dread ſhe heard the dire decree,
And ſaw his anger'd eye;
"Recal it back, or ſoon," cry'd ſhe,
"You'll ſee Selena die."

But Damon, deaf to nature's call,
Beheld her heart-felt grief;
And tears that piteoufly did fall,
But gave her no relief.

Soon pale and wan Selena grew:
"Rinaldo—Oh!" fhe cry'd;
Then fwift refign'd the breath fhe drew,
And, broken-hearted, died.

Rinaldo heard the mournful tale,
And wept Selena's fate;
Repentant forrow now prevail'd—
'Twas now, alas! too late.

Too late repentant Damon view'd
Selena, lifelefs fair!
And curs'd the hour he e'er refus'd
To liften to her pray'r.

From this fad tale a moral learn,
"Bad paffions fhould fubfide:"
Rin aldo ruin'd—Damon fpurn'd—
And thus Selena died.

Somers kept his eye attentively fixed upon Bridport; he ſaw him change colour ſeveral times during the reading of it.

When Theodore had finiſhed, he drew out his handkerchief and wiped a tear from his eye the ſubject had occaſioned; and this was ſucceeded by another; at length riſing up he preſſed the hand of Somers, and exclaimed, "My dear friend, I ſee my error, you have conquered.

"You have not only been the means of reſtoring me to liberty and the ſociety of my daughter, but you have reſtored me to myſelf by ridding my heart of an unpleaſant gueſt."

At this period Sir Thomas ſent in his name, and Bridport requeſted he might be admitted.

When Sir Thomas entered, Bridport was preparing to addreſs him; but at the

ſame

ſame time, with a countenance ſomewhat ſtern.

"Firſt," cried Somers, "permit me to ſpeak: I ſee Sir Thomas is prepared for an apology, and if I may judge from Mr. Bridport's countenance it will be favourably received; but if you will follow my advice, let all that is paſt be forgotten, a recapitulation may irritate the wound, but cannot heal it." Then addreſſing himſelf to Sir Thomas, "I have," ſaid he, "ſpoken with Mr. Bridport concerning your requeſt, and he has conſented, truſting you will make his daughter happy, which alone can render him ſo."

"Mr. Bridport may depend," rejoined Sir Thomas, "I will make her happineſs the ſtudy of my life; ſince I have been taught to feel the loſs of her, I know how to eſtimate her worth."

"Fulfil your promife," rejoined Bridport, "and you will make me regret I ever harboured an unfavourable opinion of you."

Sir Thomas affured him he fhould take a pleafure in fo doing; then taking Somers by the hand, requefted a private audience with him; but Bridport expreffing a defire to go in fearch of his daughter, gave Sir Thomas an opportunity of communicating his bufinefs. "I have brought with me," faid he, "the fum which I wrefted from Bridport, and likewife what I think will be fufficient to compenfate for the lofs of property he has fuftained through me; and will thank you to deliver it to him when I am gone, as it would, perhaps, only renew a difagreeable fubject if I were to tender it to him."

Somers agreed with him in opinion, and

and promifed to act according to his request.

"Having difpofed of this bufinefs," refumed Sir Thomas, "I will now attend to what more materially concerns me: this morning the rector of your parifh waited on me, requefting I would exert my influence with Sir Charles, in behalf of a living which became vacant yefterday on his eftate, by the death of the incumbent.

"You are perfectly aware I can now have little hope of fucceeding in an application to Sir Charles, I therefore referred the rector to you, and he will fhortly be here, as I paffed him on the road.

"Mr. Bridport was brought up to the church, and has taken orders; I need fay no more to you than I fhould efteem it

 a favour

a favour if you would obtain the vacant living for him: Sir Charles will deny you nothing."

"You may depend," replied Somers, "I will take the earlieſt opportunity of forwarding your wiſhes. I ſhall now," continued Somers, "take a pleaſure in introducing you to Miſs Bridport; at the ſame time permit me to remind you, that you cannot too ſoon carry your intentions into effect."

Sir Thomas replied by informing him he had ſent for a licence, and ſhould have it in his power before the expiration of three days.

Somers now deſired a ſervant to acquaint Miſs Bridport he ſhould be happy to ſpeak with her; Sophia attended the ſummons; and the rector having ſent in his name, Somers left her in the company of

Sir

Sir Thomas, to enjoy that happineſs which can only ariſe from a virtuous attachment.

Somers attended the rector, who acquainted him with his buſineſs, at the ſame time adding, that the intereſt he took in the welfare of every individual had prompted him to requeſt his interference.

"I ſhould ill deſerve the character you beſtow on me," replied Somers, "if I acceded to your wiſh.

"Can I aſk Sir Charles to give you the vacant living, while you are already in the poſſeſſion of ſo rich a one, and while numbers of clergymen are nearly in want of bread?

"Excluſive of this, the little intereſt I have is engaged for a perſon who ſtands in need of one; neither do I approve of

a minifter holding feveral livings, as it would be impoffible for him to do his duty by the different parifhioners."

Much argument enfued; but as Somers was firm in the latter opinion, it was of no ufe.

In the courfe of the day Sir Charles, as was now ufual, came to vifit him.

Somers commenced the converfation by informing him he had a favour to requeft.

Sir Charles defired him to name it, and if it lay in his power he would oblige him.

Somers took him at his word, and mentioned the vacant living, expreffing his wifh that he would beftow it on Bridport.

" What, give it to a farmer!" cried

Sir Charles; "that would indeed be a little ſingular."

Somers informed him Bridport had been brought up to the church, and had taken orders; "I will anſwer for it," ſaid he, "Bridport will preach as good a ſermon as you would have patience to hear, for I have generally noticed you take a nap during the time."

"You are not aware," reſumed Sir Charles, "I could have, perhaps, a thouſand pounds for it."

"Very poſſible," replied Somers; "but then you would loſe the pleaſure of beſtowing it; therefore, permit me to call Bridport; I ſee you have a ſtrong inclination to oblige me."

Sir Charles ſmiled, and Somers rang the bell, and requeſted his attendance; when

when Bridport entered, "SirCharles," ſaid he, "has a favour to requeſt of you."

Bridport bowed, "he ſhould be happy," he ſaid, "to oblige Sir Charles in any thing as far as lay in his power."

Sir Charles found there was no poſſibility of receding, acquainted him with his intentions, and deſired he would take poſſeſſion of it immediately.

Bridport teſtified his gratitude, and informed him concerning the event which was about to take place between Sir Thomas and his daughter.

Sir Charles congratulated him; "It happens fortunate," ſaid he, "that the living became vacant at this period, as you will now be able to live in a ſtate of reſpectability without being obligated to Sir Thomas for the means; as I have no doubt,

notwithſtanding

notwithſtanding his preſent contrition, your mind is too much hurt to receive any gratuity from him."

Bridport aſſured him the gift was doubly acceptable on that account.

Somers now produced the notes Sir Thomas had given him, and deſired he would accept them.

Bridport heſitated.

"Take them," rejoined Sir Charles, "he has done no more than an act of juſtice."

Somers joining in the requeſt, he accepted them; after which, he left Sir Charles and Bridport together, while he went to Sir Thomas who was ſtill at the lodge, and communicated the agreeable intelligence.

Sir Thomas had not ſo far forgot his pride, but that it gave him pleaſure on the receipt of it; he preferred marrying the

daughter

daughter of a beneficed clergyman, fooner than the daughter of a farmer.

Every thing now feemed to pafs on in uninterrupted happinefs. Somers received letters from London relative to Mrs. Somers.

He had hitherto not expended a fourth of his annual income, notwithftanding the many benefits he daily beftowed; but now a profpect of felicity began to open, through his again being bleffed with the fociety of the only perfon who could render him happy: he determined on altering his mode of life; and, therefore, immediately hired fervants, and procured a carriage for her accommodation.

He had not known for a confiderable time what it was to feel the want of thefe extra comforts, having no perfon to fhare them with him; neither did he care what

was

was produced on his table, his heart having been too much oppreffed to tafte any enjoyment.

But in proportion as his forrows decreafed, fo did he again begin to relifh the bleffings of life.

Sir Thomas having obtained a licence, Somers, accompanied by Sir Charles and Bridport, attended him and Sophia to the altar, where they regiftered before God their irrevocable vows of truth and affection; after which, Somers requefted Sir Thomas and Lady Blandford would fpend a few days with him.

Sir Thomas agreed to remain for two days, but pleaded the neceffity of returning to his houfe at the expiration of that period.

The day was fpent with the utmoft harmony and conviviality.

And Sir Thomas was taught to experience the difference between pleafure that originates in vice, and happinefs attained by virtue unalloyed by the remorfe of confcience, the fure attendant on vicious tranfactions.

Sir Thomas was happy in having rendered others fo; his Sophia received him to her arms with ecftacy and gratitude, inftead of grief and horror; delightful exchange! an exchange that endeared her to him more than ever, and made him regret the happy days he had loft in purfuing a different line of conduct.

On the following morning Sir Thomas obferving Somers walking in his garden, approached him, and taking hold of his hand, "How fhall I, my friend," cried he, "find words to thank you? I had

ftrangely

ſtrangely erred, and ſhould in all probability have purſued the ſame courſe, had you not checked me, and by pointing out the path I ought to take, conducted me to real happineſs; permit me, therefore, to utter the effuſions of a grateful heart."

Somers aſſured him that nothing could equal the pleaſure he received in hearing him thus expreſs himſelf.

Lady Blandford made her appearance at breakfaſt, while the pleaſing tranquillity that beamed from her eye enlivened the heart of her father, and ſpread a joy around her that each participated of.

The day arrived that they had fixed for leaving Cliffdown-lodge; Lady Blandford requeſted to ſpeak with Somers; but when he approached, her heart

heart was too full to utter what ſhe wiſhed.

She took his hand and preſt it, while the tears trickled from her eye; "Think," cried ſhe, "what I would ſay, but cannot; you have been to me a dear friend indeed, and more than a parent; may Heaven bleſs you, as you have ſtrove to make me bleſt!"

Somers returned the preſſure of her hand, but his heart was ſo feelingly alive to the joy that was pourtrayed in her countenance, that he could not articulate a ſentence.

Sir Thomas now advanced, and taking her hand, led her to his carriage, which was waiting for them; Bridport followed, as Sir Thomas requeſted he would ſpend a few weeks with him, before he finally

took

took up his reſidence at the living Sir Charles had beſtowed on him.

Somers was now once more left with his young friend Theodore.

CHAP. III.

SOMERS waited with painful anxiety for a letter from Freeman that ſhould acquaint him with his ſucceſs relative to Mrs. Somers; when the poſt arrived and no letter was brought, it conſiderably added to his perplexity: another poſt arrived, and ſtill no letter was produced.

While he ſat ruminating on what could occaſion Freeman's ſilence, he was greatly aſtoniſhed on beholding Sternhold, his father-in-law, approaching the houſe, in company with Sir Charles.

Sternhold had left London, thinking he ſhould be able to overtake his daughter on the road, and could then prevail on her to return with him; but having been miſinformed

misinformed respecting her departure, and as she had pursued a different road to that she intended, he could not obtain any intelligence of her; he therefore imagined she must either be in London or had reached her husband.

He determined, therefore, on paying a visit to Somers, as he should then have an opportunity of satisfying himself, as likewise to load him with some reproaches for the method he had taken to regain the possession of her.

Having travelled within a few miles of Bristol, he stopped at an inn for the purpose of enquiring which was the nearest way to his house.

The inn-keeper informed him it would be the most expedient to discharge his chaise, and walk over the fields to the ferry, by which means he would reach

Cliffdown-

Cliffdown-lodge in as ſhort a time as he could arrive at Briſtol.

Sternhold took his advice, and having paid the lad, was preparing to follow the directions, when a man who had experienced the benevolence of Somers approached him, and offered to be his guide.

"Do you know the fellow?" ſaid Sternhold.

"The fellow!" rejoined the man; "Mr. Somers deſerves a more reſpectful title.— If it is the ſame perſon I mean, there are few ſuch worthy gentlemen in the county."

Sternhold replied to this ſpeech with a ſmile of contempt.

"Oh!" cried the man, "if you are good at that, you muſt e'en go by yourſelf," and left him to purſue his walk.

When

When he reached the ferry, and had got into the boat, "Is there not a man," ſaid he, "of the name of Somers, who lives near this place?"

"Aye, the Lord love him," cried the ferryman; "I'ſe wull ſhew thee to his houſe;—I'ſe be gooing thig way, and if zo be as I waunt, I'ſe would get up on the night to do un a ſarvice."

"The raſcal has your good name," reſumed Sternhold.

The ferryman had unfaſtened his boat, and was in the act of puſhing it off. "The raſcal!" cried he; "thee beeſt miſtaken, Muſter Zummers is no raſcal; and zince thee thinkſt un is, thee muſt get over as thee canſt, vor God rot un if I'ſe take thee; I'ſe dount like the looks o'thee."

Having ſaid this, he ſprung out of the boat,

boat, faſtened it as before, and took the paddle with him.

Sternhold ſtood in the boat, loſt in aſtoniſhment at the conduct of the man; and at length he declared, if he did not inſtantly return and ferry him over, he would make him.

"What!" cried the ferryman, "doſt think I be avraid o'thee.—If thee wants a good drubbing, I'll ſet my wife to beat thee, I'll not voul my hands o'thee."

Sternhold found it would be impoſſible to perſuade the man, and therefore left the boat and purſued his walk along the bank of the river, till he diſcovered a man ſeated in a boat fiſhing.

Sternhold, by offering a trifling gratuity, prevailed on him to row him over, during which time he prudently held his peace; but

but when he ſet his foot on the ſhore, "Do you know," ſaid he, "a petty gentleman that lives near this place, whoſe name is Somers?"

"A petty gentleman!" replied the man; "odds bobs he makes the great gentlemen aſhamed o' themſelves. I'ſe dount think hisvortune be large, and yet it would zurpriſe thee to hear the main good he does, there is not a poor body for mailes round but has eat his bread and cheeſe;—no zooner aſk than give."

"So, I ſuppoſe," reſumed Sternhold; "he always was a prodigal ſcoundrel."

"Look thee," cried the man, "I'ſe dount knaw what thee meanſt by calling him a ſcoundrel. I'ſe think thee beeſt no better than thee ſhouldſt be, zo take thy zixpence back; I'ſe not ha' thy money. Muſter Zummers a ſcoundrel! I'ſe be

half a mind to take thee to Zur Charles vor that, he'd teach thee to call names; here, take thy money, and thank thyſelf thee doſent catch a click o' thy head, vor I'ſe never had o' better mind o' my life."

Two or three colliers now came up, and Sternhold, fearing they ſhould hold in the ſame ſtory, thought it prudent to purſue his way without waiting for an anſwer to his queſtion.

When he had walked out of ſight of the fiſherman, he requeſted of a perſon he met, if he would inform him where to find Mr. Somers.

The man turned round to direct him, when looking towards a hill, "There be Zur Charles," ſaid he, "going down the hill. I'ſe be ſworn he be gooing to zee

un, as they be main thick. If thee askest un he'll shew thee."

"Who is Sir Charles?" resumed Sternhold.

"Oh, he be a main great gentleman," replied the man, "and owns all the land about here."

Sternhold thanked him, and shortly overtaking Sir Charles, repeated his enquiry.

Sir Charles replied by informing him he was going to his house, and would conduct him.

Sternhold, from the intimation he had received from the last man, thought Sir Charles would be able to inform him relative to his daughter. "Is Mr. Somers a married man?" said he.

"He is," replied Sir Charles; "his

wife has been with her relations in London, and is hourly expected here."

"Then ſhe is not yet arrived?" rejoined Sternhold, haſtily.

Sir Charles was ſurpriſed at the eagerneſs of his enquiry, and looking in his face, thought he could diſcern a ſtrong likeneſs between the portrait of Mrs. Somers and his preſent companion.

"I really do not know," replied he, "but hope ſhe is. My viſit to Mr. Somers this morning is to congratulate him. I ſhould be ſorry to be diſappointed."

"He will ſcarcely thank you," reſumed Sternhold. "If what I have heard be true, he only wants her ſociety merely for a motive of revenge to her father; truſt me, he has no regard whatever for

her,

her, but as it affords him an opportunity of exercifing his fpleen."

"You wrong him," cried Sir Charles; "the father is the very character you defcribe the fon to be. I have witneffed his forrow on her account, forrows which have nearly brought him to the grave.

"I verily believe, fo much is he beloved in this country, that if her father were to make his appearance, and utter fuch a fentence, he would be thrown into the river."

Sir Charles then took a review of the conduct of Somers fince he had known him, and animadverted with great feverity on the inveteracy of his father-in-law. "Inftead of being proud he has fuch a fon," continued Sir Charles, "he cannot endure to hear one fentence uttered in his praife: thofe who have found it their in-

tereſt to be acquainted with Sternhold, have invariably preſerved it by ſpeaking againſt the ſon; confident that one word ſpoken in his favour would loſe them his friendſhip; and thus it is he has found food for his malice.

"But the happineſs of my friend Somers is, or ſhortly will be, reſtored to him, through the poſſeſſion of his wife. It will then be his own fault if ever he ſuffer her relations to have an opportunity of poiſoning her mind for the future."

What Sir Charles had *related* of Somers made a ſtrong impreſſion on the mind of Sternhold, and he could not help obſerving by way of reply, that if Somers merited the character he had given of him, his father-in-law muſt have been greatly impoſed on indeed.

"It is in vain," reſumed Sir Charles,

"to ſay any thing in juſtification of Sternhold; his infamous conduct in endeavouring to ſeparate a man and wife cannot be excuſed, nor can any thing be pleaded in palliation.

"I am of opinion, that a man who has been guilty of ſuch a practice, is deliberately bad; and therefore never conſulted the propriety or impropriety of the ſtep. It was ſufficient for him to know that it accorded with his own ſavage nature."

"You wrong him," rejoined Sternhold; "as I am confident, when he ſhall hear the character of his ſon impartially laid down, he will drop his reſentment, and be happy to acknowledge him."

"Of that," reſumed Sir Charles, "I have no doubt. If he has the ſmalleſt degree of paternal regard for his daughter, it muſt be the caſe, and would be whether

he was taught to efteem his fon or not. When he had it in his power, he facrificed the happinefs of Somers that he might have his daughter's company; and for the fame reafon he will facrifice his refentment."

"You put the worft conftruction on it," refumed Sternhold, "that lays in your power; but if Somers is the man you defcribe him to be, he will think differently."

By this time they arrived at the gate. Somers beheld Sternhold in company with Sir Charles, and was at a lofs to account for the motives of his vifit, yet concluded it would be no more than proper to meet him, and left the room for that purpofe.

Sternhold requefted a few minutes' converfation with him, and Somers defired a fervant to conduct him in.

Sir Charles pulled Somers by his ſleeve, "Do you know that old man?" ſaid he.

"Certainly," replied Somers; "it is Mr. Sternhold."

"I thought as much," reſumed Sir Charles; "faith, I have given him his leſſon; I have been telling him your father-in-law is a great rogue, and he appears half inclined to believe me. But now, Somers, remember what you have already ſuffered, and take my advice.—If he ſhould wiſh to heal the difference between you, by no means conſent to it; you will be far more happy in the company of Mrs. Somers when eſtranged from her family, than if ſhe were to continue their acquaintance. The old man cannot part with his daughter's ſociety; he will, therefore, ſacrifice his reſentment to obtain it."

"I ſhould hope," replied Somers, "when he witneſſes my conduct to Louiſa, he will be aſhamed that he has thus long perpetuated his reſentment. It is better to reform one man than to puniſh a thouſand. If Sternhold has an affection for his daughter, it is highly commendable, and is an ornament to human nature; would you then have me convert that amiable ſentiment he poſſeſſes into a puniſhment? Should a father be made to ſuffer for the affection he has towards his child, in the ſame manner he made me ſuffer for having an affection for my wife?—No.—However wrong his conduct may have been to me, I cannot return the ſame to him."

"Faith, Somers," rejoined Sir Charles, "you are not worthy to be called a man; you have no reſentment in you."

"What

"What ſhould I have to do with reſentment?" returned Somers; "it is an unpleaſant intruder, a painful gueſt; the human race would be far happier without it: excuſe me," ſaid he, "for a few minutes, Sternhold will think I neglect him."

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

WHEN Somers approached the parlour where Sternhold had been conducted, he bowed refpectfully.

"I troubled you with this vifit," faid Sternhold, "to requeft you would explain your motives for taking away my daughter in the manner you did. Had you wifhed for her fociety, why did you not apply to me?"

"When I eftimated your conduct for five years paft," replied Somers, "I concluded fuch a ftep would be the moft ineligible of any I could have purfued."

"It is plain," refumed Sternhold, "you did not know me."

"Perhaps not," replied Somers; "but

pardon

pardon me when I ſay, you poſſibly might not know yourſelf."

The converſation was here interrupted by the entrance of a ſervant, who announced Miſs Freeman and a lady.

Before Somers had time to anſwer the ſervant, Auguſta entered, followed by Louiſa and her child.

The moment Louiſa beheld him, ſhe ran and threw herſelf into his arms, exclaiming, "My dear, dear Charles!"

Somers preſt her to his heart, and kiſſed the tear as falling.

As ſoon as he could articulate a ſentence, "Ah, my God!" exclaimed he, "what a moment of ecſtacy is this!"

"Never, Charles," cried Louiſa, "never will I again be taught to leave you."

Somers now caught up his infant in his arms, and kiſſed it, while the tears of a

parent

parent bedewed its face; then turning to Louisa for the purpose of introducing her to her father, "Mr. Sternhold," said he.

"Do not mention any of my family," cried Louisa. "It was through their advice I have been induced to neglect you."

Sternhold had been a silent spectator of this scene, nor had his daughter seen him.

When she uttered this reproach, it struck him forcibly. He came forward, "My children," said he, "I have erred, but I hope it will not be too late—"

"Hold," cried Somers, interrupting him; "I cannot listen to an apology from a father, nor does there need any.—If you share in the joy the scene creates, it is all that I desire."

"I can remember," resumed Sternhold, "fifteen

"fifteen years back, when you were but a boy, and ſtood high in my eſtimation, I adopted you as my ſon; be now my ſon indeed:—you have my daughter, make her happy, and ſhare with her, her father's heart."

Louiſa now flew to her father and preſſed his hand, which he immediately joined to that of her huſband, while he ſent up a prayer that Heaven would bleſs them.

Sir Charles entered and obſerved this ſcene of reconciliation. "Thus it is," cried he, "that virtue is rewarded. You, Mr. Somers, who have of late ſo eminently ſtudied to render others happy, are now, if I may judge from your appearance, rendered completely ſo."

"This is a day," replied Somers, "I never expected to ſee.—Now I ſhall not only be happy myſelf, but ſhall have it in

my

my power to make Louiſa ſo likewiſe, as I am aware the affection ſhe poſſeſſes for her parents is of that nature, ſhe could enjoy no ſolid ſatisfaction without having an opportunity of ſeeing them."

Auguſta congratulated both parties, as did Sir Charles, and thinking they would probably wiſh to ſpend the evening without interruption, they left them; the chaiſe being ſtill in waiting, conveyed them home.

Theodore now made his appearance, and was introduced by Somers to Mr. Sternhold and Louiſa; he was not within when Auguſta arrived, and on being informed ſhe was in the houſe, he kept out of the way on purpoſe to avoid her.

During the evening, hearing Mrs. Somers mention that ſhe expected Auguſta would viſit her the next morning, he

made

made it his requeſt that ſhe would on no account acquaint either her or Sir Charles with his being at the lodge.

"If you particularly wiſh it," replied Louiſa, "I certainly will not; but I confeſs it rather ſurpriſes me that you ſhould have any fear on her account.

"She has frequently mentioned your name to me; and if I miſtake not, you ſtand high in her eſteem."

"I am infinitely obliged to her for her good opinion," rejoined Theodore; "but ſtill I have particular reaſons for making the requeſt, which I hope you will accede to."

"Undoubtedly," replied Louiſa; "you may depend upon me, although I feel greatly diſappointed in being debarred the pleaſure of communicating it to her, ſince I am confident, from the anxiety ſhe

teſtified

teſtified on your account, ſhe would be happy to know where you are."

"I do not doubt it," rejoined Theodore; "I ſtand indebted for one favour ſhe did me in town, and I preſume ſhe wiſhes to treat me in a ſimilar manner."

"Aſſure yourſelf," ſaid Somers, "here has been ſome miſtake. Miſs Freeman would not be guilty of ſuch deliberate cruelty. I ſhall take the firſt opportunity of ſpeaking to her concerning it, as it but ill accords with what ſhe once related to me."

On the following morning Sir Charles and Auguſta ſtrolled down to Cliffdown-lodge.

Louiſa and her father were walking in the garden, while Somers and Theodore were engaged in converſation in the houſe, and did not obſerve them enter.

Augusta and Sir Charles joined Mrs. Somers and Sternhold, and pursued their walk till they reached the spot where stood the temple dedicated to solitude.

"What have we here?" cried Sternhold.

"To this place," replied Sir Charles, "your son used constantly to repair for the purpose of indulging his sorrow.

"Here is where he ruminated on the cruelty of his father, and the neglect of his wife. Here I once detected him, and exposed the folly of his conduct, which was preying on his life.

"It was at my instigation he sent for Mrs. Somers, and to her I promised to restore the key, which I possessed myself of, lest he should again relapse."

Sir Charles now produced the key, and Louisa, having unlocked the door, entered,

accompanied

accompanied by her father, and followed by Sir Charles and Augusta.

Sternhold surveyed the portraits, and perused the letters he had sent to his daughter when she formerly resided with him. "'Tis plain," said he, "I have wonderfully wronged him; but such was my inveteracy, I encouraged every one who spoke against him, and thought myself insulted by those who ventured to say a word in his behalf."

"It is the only resource those have," rejoined Sir Charles, "who delight in doing wrong; you were always happy in listening to his enemies, because it accorded with your own feelings, and furnished you with a plea in your defence. Here," continued he, "on this chair he sat, his head reclined upon his hand, his eyes surveying those portraits, while he

fought

fought relief in the tears that ftole down his cheek, and the fruitlefs fighs that came from a heart oppreffed."

Louifa turned from this fcene, and drew out her handkerchief to hide the grief its recital created.

Somers and Theodore, not knowing Sir Charles and Augufta were in the garden, had come in purfuit of Louifa and her father.

No fooner did Somers behold the fituation of Louifa, and concluding from whence it originated, than he caught her in his arms and preft her to his heart. "Thefe tears, my love," cried he, "afford a pleafing affurance that I fhall never again have occafion to repair here as formerly."

Louifa returned the preffure, but her heart was too full to utter a fentence.

During

During this ſcene, Sir Charles was attentively ſurveying Theodore. He did not till now know that he had returned, as he had always avoided him, and Somers had been deſired by him not to mention it.

Auguſta was covered with bluſhes, yet wiſhing to do away the unpleaſant opinion he entertained, "Give me leave to congratulate you," ſaid ſhe, "on your ſafe return to the protection of Mr. Somers My couſin, Edward, will be happy to be informed of it, as he is extremely anxious on your account."

"I feel myſelf greatly obliged to you," replied Theodore, "as I certainly prefer the protection of Mr. Somers to that of St. Aubin, to whoſe kind care you ſo generouſly conſigned me." He then bowed

bowed refpectfully to Sir Charles and Augufta, and left them before fhe had it in her power to articulate a reply.

Sir Charles recollected the fufpicions thrown out againft Theodore by Sir Thomas, and although one of them had proved falfe, yet he concluded he had fufficient reafon to know that a part of the refidue was true, at leaft refpecting his endeavouring to obtain the affections of his daughter.

He obferved the blufh that was vifible on his daughter's cheek when they met, as likewife the evident mortification fhe betrayed on hearing Theodore's reply, and therefore as foon as he was gone, "Mr. Somers," faid he, "I think you are highly culpable in harbouring a young man you know fo little of; and what has reached your knowledge does not in the leaft

tend to his credit: you ſhould reſtore him to his friends, if he eally has any; for my part, I do not think he has; but whether he has or not, they can be of no note, or he would not be permitted ſo tacitly to remain here."

Somers defended his young friend, as uſual, to the utmoſt of his ability, and concluded by declaring he ſhould not feel himſelf juſtified in delivering him over to his friends, or of witholding from him his protection.

"If that be your determination," reſumed Sir Charles, "it will deprive me of the pleaſure of ſeeing you here, as you muſt be aware, after what has been related to me, I cannot encourage his acquaintance in my family."

"I ſhould be ſorry," rejoined Somers, "to be debarred of your ſociety on his

account;

account: he has been with me for some days, and has always avoided you; neither does he wish to be acquainted with any branch of your family; which is plain from his requesting Mrs. Somers last night not to inform either you or Augusta that he is here.

"He met you this morning by accident, not knowing you were in the garden, and you see he has taken the earliest opportunity of retiring. I will answer for it, he will be more cautious for the future."

Every word uttered by Somers, was felt in its full force by Augusta. She would have given the world for an opportunity of speaking with Theodore, and explaining how his mistake had originated.

But, what with her father's suspicions

and

and Theodore's misconception, she saw no prospect of accomplishing it.

From the first moment she beheld him, when a prisoner at her father's, to the present period, her heart was unalterably fixed on him; and although from some misrepresentations that had taken place, she had been driven to the necessity of treating him with cool civility, yet it was contrary to what her affection would have dictated; but when Freeman related the conversation he had with the Jew, and she found from the letter she received from Somers he was guiltless of the crime she had attached to him, she no longer looked on him in an unfavourable light, but permitted her affection to have its full weight. She felt extremely mortified that Somers should likewise join with Theodore in his suspicions

against

against her, which ſhe concluded he did, from the partial promiſe he had juſt made to her father concerning Theodore; and this appeared the more aſtoniſhing, as ſhe had made to him a candid avowal of her ſentiments.

In this perplexing dilemma ſhe knew not what path to purſue.

At length it occurred to her, that by making Mrs. Somers a confidante ſhe ſhould be able, through her means, to explain away the miſtake, and for this intent ſhe beckoned to her.

Louiſa took the hint: "We will leave theſe gentlemen," ſaid ſhe, "to enjoy their own converſation for a few minutes, while we ſtroll round the garden."

When they were gone, Sir Charles recapitulated more fully his reaſons for not wiſhing to promote an acquaintance with

Theodore, and concluded by throwing out ſome unpleaſant ſuſpicions concerning his being an impoſter.

But Somers by his reply diſpelled his fears. He aſſured him, whatever might be Theodore's ſentiments, he was confident he would not trouble Auguſta with a repetition of them. And pledged his word that he ſhould not again intrude himſelf upon her company, unleſs it were conſented to or permitted by him.

Sir Charles, on this aſſurance, agreed to her viſiting Louiſa and himſelf as uſual; at the ſame time ſignifying that he ſhould place a firm reliance on his promiſe.

Auguſta had ſcarcely time to enter into an explanation with Louiſa, before Theodore made his appearance, and bowing reſpectfully, put a letter into her hand; having ſo done he departed, without

her time to utter a ſentence. In fact, Auguſta was ſo much agitated on his ſudden appearance, and ſo much confuſed, that ſhe knew not what ſhe did.

"I declare," ſaid ſhe, "I am afraid to open this letter; what can it poſſibly contain?"

"Bleſs me, Miſs Freeman," ſaid Louiſa, "you tremble exceedingly, and are ſcarcely able to breathe. For Heaven's ſake, reſume your fortitude."

"I cannot get the better of my ſenſations," replied Auguſta; "do you open the letter and read it, for I am totally unable."

Louiſa obeyed, and read as follows:

'Madam,

'I have taken the liberty of troubling 'you with theſe few lines, being unwil'ling to intrude upon your company, 'fearing

‘ fearing leſt my heart ſhould re
‘ my prudence, and I ſhould once more
‘ offend you by reſuming my former error,
‘ notwithſtanding the ſtrong reaſons you
‘ have given me to know that ſuch ſenti-
‘ ments would not be acceptable to you.

‘ When I conſider the unfavourable
‘ light in which I appeared to you on
‘ the road to London, I am not at a loſs
‘ to account for your ſeeking out St.
‘ Aubin, and giving him ſuch informa-
‘ tion as enabled him to trace me. Yet
‘ ſince I am confident you muſt now be
‘ aware I am not deſerving the cenſure
‘ you then laid on me, I hope I ſhall be
‘ permitted to remain here in ſafety, with-
‘ out dreading a ſimilar conduct on your
‘ part. I could wiſh, if poſſible, to re-
‘ move any cauſe you may have for ſuch

'a practice in future; receive, therefore, 'my apology for having insulted you 'with my addresses, which arose from a 'confidence of what I am, and dictated 'by what I felt; but having suffered for 'my presumption, be assured, whatever 'pain it may cost me, I will not again re-'peat them, as I am perfectly aware the 'inauspicious circumstances which intro-'duced me to your house, would render 'it highly improper in me so to do.

'I sincerely hope you will not debar 'yourself the society of Mr. or Mrs. So-'mers on my account, as it is not my 'intention to remain long here. In the 'mean time, that I may not give you 'offence, I will, although painful to re-'late, and still more so to practise, stu-'diously endeavour to avoid you; flatter-'ing myself, this conduct on my part

'will fo far enfure your efteem, that I 'fhall not again be put into the power 'of St. Aubin.

'I remain,

'Madam,

'Your moft obedient,

'Theodore Somers."

"What a cruel letter!" faid Augufta; "I did not imagine Theodore could have ufed me thus. I certainly muft anfwer it, and explain the circumftance: his perfifting in this error aftonifhes me. He might have been affured, if it were only on account of the friendfhip Mr. Somers poffeffed for him, I could not have been guilty of fuch treachery."

"I think it will be improper for you to write," rejoined Louifa. "If you will relate the caufe from whence his fufpi-

cions

cions originate, I will take the firſt opportunity of recapitulating it to Mr. Somers, who will, no doubt, acquaint him."

Auguſta thanked her, and rehearſed the whole of what had paſſed between them from the commencement of their acquaintance; her accidental meeting of St. Aubin; the reply ſhe gave to ſome queſtions put to her in conſequence of Freeman having read the hand-bill; the ſingular way he was apprehended in London, and what the Jew had informed her couſin.

Sir Charles now approached, which put an end to the converſation; and after ſpending an hour with Mr. and Mrs. Somers, he returned with Auguſta to his houſe.

Sternhold ſpent the reſidue of the day at Cliffdown-lodge, and ſet off for Lon-

 don

don early on the following morning to acquaint Mrs. Sternhold with the termination of his refentment, and the confequent happinefs of their daughter.

I fhall now leave Somers to enjoy the fociety of her he had fo much languifhed for, and to reconcile, if poffible, the difference between Augufta, Sir Charles, and Theodore, while I turn my attention to the long-abfent, but not forgotten, Clariffa.

CHAP. V.

WHEN Clariffa reached town, in company with Theodore, fhe took up her refidence at the Gloucefter coffee-houfe, it being too late in the evening to think of fearching for lodgings.

Clariffa having retired to her chamber, had leifure to ruminate on the paft events.

Augufta's letter had informed her of Mrs. Bentley's death. This was an afflicting circumftance, and brought the tears into her eyes. She had been to her a fecond mother. It confiderably augmented her grief, when fhe reflected

her

her abſence had haſtened the awful period.

This naturally recalled to her a ſenſe of her ſituation.

Mrs. Bentley had no friend to whom ſhe could reſort for protection, and if ſhe had, and were ſtill living, ſhe knew not where to find them, as ſhe had retired in the country at an early age.

She knew that Mr. Somers would render her every aſſiſtance upon her application; as he had frequently ſignified his intention of becoming her protector on the deceaſe of Mrs. Bentley: yet he was ſtill but a young man, living ſeparate from his wife. She was aware that the malicious part of ſociety would make ſome unpleaſant remarks on it, and therefore determined on not adopting ſuch a plan.

Augusta Freeman next presented herself to her recollection.

She knew, notwithstanding the letter she had received from her, which originated in mistake, that if she waited on her, and recapitulated the circumstance in its true light, she could find in her a protector.

But then it occurred to her mind, that by pursuing such a plan, it would appear as if she wished to throw herself in the way of Freeman; which would be highly improper, first, because he had addressed her on the score of marriage; and, secondly, as she conceived he was the person who occasioned her being taken from Mrs. Bentley's.

Theodore had offered his protection; but he was scarcely able to protect himself: neither would it be advisable to accept

accept it, more particularly after what Augusta had suggested in her letter, as by so doing it would afford means of censure. She even wished she had not taken up her residence at the same house for that night; but it was now too late to remedy the evil: yet she determined on the following morning to seek for a lodging, and not acquaint him with the place.

With this intent she arose early, and after walking through several streets, observed on the window of a private house, a bill signifying a small apartment was to be let furnished. Having knocked at the door, Clarissa requested to see the room.

The woman replied, she was afraid it would not suit her.

This reply was dictated from her appearance;

pearance; for although Clariſſa was not dreſſed in coſtly apparel, yet there was ſomething in her whole figure which indicated ſhe was above mediocrity, and therefore not likely to approve of ſo humble an apartment as ſhe had to diſpoſe of.

Clariſſa repeating her requeſt, ſhe was ſhown into a back room on the ſecond floor, and having declared it met with her approbation, the woman requeſted a reference.

Clariſſa had none to give, and therefore heſitated: ſhe aſſured her that ſhe might truſt her with ſafety in the houſe; that ſhe was at preſent an unfortunate character, but was able to pay for the room, as likewiſe to ſupport herſelf for ſome time.

The woman miſunderſtood her; ſhe

knew

knew the term of "an unfortunate character" was generally adopted by those who get their bread by casual prostitution, and therefore replied, "I am sorry for it; I should not have thought as much from your appearance and address: I do not let my lodgings to any person who sees company."

Clarissa did not understand the technical term of "seeing company;" and therefore replied, "I assure you I see no company; I have not a friend in town, nor in the world, except one gentleman, and I do not expect he will visit London."

Clarissa knew not that this reply would be construed to her disadvantage; she was not aware that the name of 'friend,' was what an unfortunate character distinguishes the gentleman by who keeps her.

"To

"To be plain, madam," replied the woman, "I neither let my lodgings to thofe who fee company, or have been in keeping."

"Good Heavens!" faid Clariffa, "what fhould incline you to have fo unfavourable a fufpicion of me? we certainly mifunderftand each other."

An explanation now took place, and the woman having apologifed, fhewed her into a parlour, where Clariffa, to fatisfy her doubts, related the events that had brought her to London, and the death of her friend Mrs. Bentley, which deprived her of a protector.

Her recital was delivered with that innocent fimplicity which always accompanies truth, mingled with the tears a recital of Mrs. Bentley's death had occafioned.

ed, that gained the woman's commiſeration.

She requeſted her to ſit down and partake of her breakfaſt, during which time ſhe acquainted Clariſſa that her huſband was a hair-dreſſer, employed by a number of different ladies, and might poſſibly be able to obtain her a ſituation as a lady's maid.

Clariſſa replied, by aſſuring her ſhe ſhould be happy to meet with ſuch an employment; which, from the education beſtowed on her, ſhe was confident of filling with credit to herſelf.

The huſband ſhortly after made his appearance.

He was a father, and poſſeſſed a heart capable of feeling for the misfortunes of others.

The

The wife related a part of Clarissa's story, and asked him if it would lay in his power to serve her.

The husband promised to make every enquiry for such a situation, and, in the mean time, thinking she would be unpleasantly situated in a lone room, offered to board her on moderate terms.

Clarissa thankfully accepted the proposal, and, being both worthy characters, she enjoyed as much comfort in their society as the distress of her mind, originating from the sense of her situation, would permit.

She went on the following day to the Gloucester coffee-house, for the purpose of desiring the waiter to take in the letter for her, which she expected in answer to the one she had sent to Somers on the evening she arrived in town; at which place she

me met Theodore, who requested she would acquaint him with her residence.

Clarissa refused, pointed out the impropriety of his visiting her, and reminded him of Augusta's letter, which so far satisfied him as to put an end to his entreaty on the subject.

She went again the next day, and received the letter from Somers, with another enclosed for Theodore; but as he was not in the house at that time, she could not give it him. In fact, he had that morning been taken by the three men before mentioned.

Clarissa perused the contents of the letter from Somers to her with astonishment.

It declared that Freeman was not guilty. At first she felt inclined to believe it; but when she considered that the men had

had made ufe of his name; that Freeman's fervant overtook her on the road fhortly after fhe had made her efcape, and that he confeffed he was in fearch of her, when fhe likewife reflected that Somers had not related who the perfon was that had caufed her to be removed from Mrs. Bentley's; thefe circumftances combined, made her doubt the truth of the letter.

She concluded Freeman had impofed on Somers with a varnifhed tale, and had prevailed on him to requeft her return, that he might have an opportunity of practifing a conduct fimilar to the former.

For this reafon fhe determined on not writing to Somers, as fhe could receive no reply from him without giving her addrefs, which would fall into Freeman's hands, and

and ſubjeɑ her to further inſult; and fearing leſt Somers ſhould have already informed him ſhe was at the Glouceſter coffee-houſe, ſhe reſolved not to venture there for the future, but left the letter encloſed to her for Theodore in the care of a waiter, deſiring him to deliver it.

A few days afterwards, as Clariſſa was ſitting at dinner, the hair-dreſſer at whoſe houſe ſhe reſided entered the room, and appeared much elated.

"I have heard," ſaid he, "of a ſituation which will exactly ſuit you."

Clariſſa enquired concerning it.

"This morning," ſaid he, "I was ſent for to dreſs Lady St. Aubin. It is a family that have juſt arrived in England from the Weſt Indies; her ladyſhip has no one to wait on her but a black ſervant ſhe brought over, and therefore will

ſtand

ſtand in need of your immediate attendance.

"Lord St. Aubin has been in England but two days; the firſt of which he ſpent at an hotel, while a furniſhed houſe was provided, which they entered laſt night; they cannot therefore have been able to hear of a ſervant as yet, and leſt they ſhould, I would have you loſe no time."

Clariſſa had put on black, in token of regard for the memory of Mrs. Bentley, and was therefore ſoon in readineſs. She aſked him if he had mentioned her name.

He replied, he had only ſaid he knew of a young lady who would be happy to accept of the ſituation, and that he would ſend her.

"If I ſhould be ſucceſsful," reſumed Clariſſa, "I will not paſs by the name of Clariſſa Leſley. I was born to figure in

[library stamp]

a different ſphere. I had an uncle, who may be now living, but who I have not thought proper to apply to, as his conduct to my father was not the moſt affectionate; yet he would think himſelf diſgraced in having a relative in ſo humble a capacity. Another reaſon is, I ſhall not be ſo liable to be traced by the perſon at whoſe inſtigation I was conveyed from home; I will therefore take up the name of my deceaſed friend, 'Maria Bentley.'"

The hair-dreſſer approved of her caution, and giving her the addreſs of Lord St. Aubin, wiſhed her ſucceſs.

CHAP. VI.

CLARISSA purfued her way till fhe reached a ftreet in the neighbourhood of Grofvenor-fquare, and having found the houfe, informed the porter of her errand, and was fhewn into a room.

Here fhe waited for fome time; at length a fervant entered, and conducted her to Lady St. Aubin.

Her ladyfhip was in the act of wiping a tear from her eye as Clariffa entered the apartment.

Lady St. Aubin queftioned her refpecting the abilities fhe poffeffed.

Clariffa informed her.

Lady St. Aubin afked her to whom fhe muft apply for a recommendation.

Clariffa replied fhe was an orphan, and almoft without a friend, having for fome time paft exifted on the bounty of an officer's widow who had lately died.

That the only friend fhe had was a gentleman who lived near Briftol, and who could teftify to the truth of her affertions; but that fhe could have wifhed not to apply to him, in confequence of fome unpleafant circumftances.

"Your appearance," faid Lady St. Aubin, "pleads greatly in your favour, but I do not feel inclined to take a perfon into my houfe without a refpectable reference. What objection have you to receiving a character from the gentleman you mention?"

Clariffa now felt herfelf neceffitated to explain; fhe therefore related the circumftance of her being conveyed from home;

the

the death of her friend in confequence; her fufpicions of Freeman, notwithftanding fhe had received a letter from Mr. Somers to the contrary.

"Let me fee the letter," refumed her ladyfhip.

Clariffa hefitated. She did not wifh her name to be known; but taking it out of her pocket fhe opened it, and folding the direction back, prefented the body of the letter for her perufal.

Lady St. Aubin read the contents, and returned it into her hands: "You are unfortunately fituated," faid fhe; "I do not think it would be prudent to acquaint your friend Somers of your refidence; therefore, as I approve of your appearance, and as an air of truth accompanies what you fay, which is ftrongly corrobo-

rated by the letter, I ſhall take you without enquiry.

The terms were immediately ſettled, and as Lady St. Aubin was in want of her attendance, ſhe promiſed to return in an hour.

Clariſſa occupied this vacant ſpace of time in viſiting the hair-dreſſer, and thanking them for the civilities ſhe had met with.

Before Clariſſa left them, ſhe requeſted that he would call at the Glouceſter coffee-houſe, and make ſome enquiries concerning Theodore; and if any letter ſhould be left for her, to take the earlieſt opportunity of forwarding it; but on no account to acquaint him of her reſidence, or the plan ſhe had adopted.

Having made this requeſt ſhe returned to Lady St. Aubin, who ſhe found, as

before,

before, extremely unhappy. She arofe on her entrance, and conducting her to the drefling-room, acquainted her with the attendance fhe fhould expect.

"You cannot, I prefume," faid Lady St. Aubin, "from the nature of your circumftances, have obtained your clothes from the country?"

Clariffa informed her fhe had not, but that fhe had purchafed a fufficient fupply for the prefent.

Lady St. Aubin infifted on her accepting a complete change of apparel, and for this purpofe opened a large trunk which had not been unpacked fince fhe left the Weft Indies, and defired her to take out the various articles it contained.

Clariffa obeyed, and after fhe had removed fome of them, fhe found a fmall japanned box.

This ſhe took up by the handle on the lid, and was proceeding with it to a table, when the box, which was not locked, opened, and the contents fell on the floor.

Lady St. Aubin aſſiſted her in replacing the trinkets that lay ſcattered about: amongſt the reſt was a ſmall caſe: "I hope," ſaid ſhe, "this miniature is not injured," at the ſame time opening it. It is not hurt by the fall, but I think the damp from the ſhip has rather diſcharged the colour." Then putting it into Clariſſa's hand, "Do you not think," continued ſhe, "it appears mildewed?"

Clariſſa ſurveyed the portrait with evident marks of ſurpriſe depicted on her countenance.

Lady St. Aubin beheld it: "What is it," ſaid ſhe, "that thus aſtoniſhes you?"

"I have

"I have certainly," replied Clariſſa, "ſeen this portrait before, or the exact reſemblance of it, and ſet in the ſame manner."

"I ſhould ſcarcely think that poſſible," rejoined Lady St. Aubin: "it is the reſemblance of his lordſhip, and what he preſented to me before we were married."

"It is very ſingular," reſumed Clariſſa, "as the dreſs was the ſame, and a remarkable mole that is on the ſide of the face exactly correſponds with the miniature I ſaw."

"It muſt have been the effect of accident," reſumed Lady St. Aubin, "as there never was, to my knowledge, any copy of it taken, except when we went abroad.

"At that time his lordſhip had my likeneſs

likenefs taken, together with a copy of this, and left it in the poffeffion of his brother, that our poor loft Frederick might have an opportunity of feeing them."

Here Lady St. Aubin again drew out her handkerchief to wipe away the tears that were falling from her eyes.

The reply of Lady St. Aubin occafioned Clariffa to proceed.

"At the time," faid fhe, "that I was fhewn the miniature, I was likewife fhewn that of a lady, fet in the fame manner. The lady was dreffed in blue, and on her head a turban cap."

"Aftonifhing!" cried Lady St. Aubin. "You muft have feen the identical portraits. Are you acquainted with Mr. St. Aubin, his lordfhip's brother?"

Clariffa replied in the negative.

At

At this juncture a fervant informed her ladyfhip that Lord St. Aubin wifhed to fpeak with her.

She left the room, and in a few minutes Clariffa was defired to attend them.

"We are rather furprifed," faid his lordfhip, "at what you have related concerning the miniatures; have the goodnefs to ftate where you faw them, and in whofe poffeffion."

"I was fhewn them," replied Clariffa, "by a young gentleman, who faid they were the refemblance of his parents."

Lady St. Aubin was greatly agitated, and exclaimed, "It certainly was my unfortunate Frederick!"

Lord St. Aubin requefted fhe would compofe herfelf; then turning to Clariffa, "When did you laft fee this young gentleman?" faid he.

" A few days back," replied Clariffa: " he came to town with me, and I left him at the Gloucefter coffee-houfe."

" You fee, my lady," cried his lordfhip, " how wrong you are to let thefe trifling circumftances thus oppreſs you."

" My lord," replied her ladyfhip, " you certainly forget what Sir William Lefley told you; why fhould you have this high opinion of your brother?"

" Say nothing farther on that fubject," refumed his lordfhip; " Sir William fpeaks only from fufpicion. You fhould be careful not to wound the character of a man without foundation." Then addreffing himfelf to Clariffa, " Did the perfon," faid he, " tell you his name?"

" Theodore Somers," refumed Clariffa, " was the name I knew him by."

" It is all a miftake," rejoined his lordfhip,

ſhip, " and I will anſwer for it my brother has the miniatures in his poſſeſſion."

He then waved his hand for Clariſſa to leave the room.

When Clariſſa had quitted them, ſhe ſat down to ruminate on what had fallen from the lips of Lady St. Aubin.

She had mentioned ſome perſon dear to her by the name of Frederick; called him loſt, and unfortunate.

She knew that Theodore Somers was only an aſſumed name; he frequently declared he had parents abroad; he had ſhewn her those miniatures; he had fled from an uncle, and Lady St. Aubin threw out a ſuſpicion againſt the brother of his lordſhip.

While ſhe was thus comparing circumſtances, the houſe-keeper entered the room.

" My poor lady," ſaid ſhe, " is ſo unhappy

happy in confequence of fomething you have faid, that my lord cannot pacify her. It is refpecting a miniature."

"Have you lived long in the family?" faid Clariffa.

"Lord blefs you!" replied the houfe-keeper; "I have lived with them ever fince they were married."

"Then you can inform me," faid Clariffa, "if they have a fon?"

"Yes," replied the houfe-keeper; "that is what makes them fo unhappy. Don't mention it to any one; he has turned out very wicked. But I'll tell you all about them; as you are now come into the family, it is fit you fhould know."

The houfe-keeper then took a chair, and fitting down befide her, began as follows:

" My lord St. Aubin had as fair an eſtate left him, on the death of his father, as any nobleman could wiſh to have; but he turned out extremely wild, and ſpent a mint of money at gaming-houſes, ſo that he was obliged to mortgage his eſtates.

" When he married my lady, he had a large fortune with her, but not enough to pay his debts; nor did he go the way to work, but lived as extravagant as before, till my lady was brought to bed of a ſon, who they named Frederick.

" My lord then began to think ſeriouſly of the way he was going on. He was remarkably fond of the child, and for his ſake determined to live more prudent.

" For this purpoſe he retired into the country,

country, discharged several of his servants, and instead of being one of the most extravagant noblemen, he became one of the most saving; for he never parted with a guinea without looking at it half a dozen times.

"At this period his brother, who had been some years in the West Indies, returned to England.

"This brother, Mr. St. Aubin, had been to reside with a rich uncle, who was a great planter, and who had sent him back with a considerable sum of money, sufficient for him to commence merchant, and promised not only to consign the produce of his plantations to him, but to recommend him to other planters.

"Upon this foundation Mr. St. Aubin commenced

commenced merchant, and ſucceeded to his utmoſt expectations.

" About three or four years afterwards the uncle died.

" He divided his perſonal property amongſt various relations, leaving a conſiderable ſum to Mr. St. Aubin; but the whole of his plantations he bequeathed to his lordſhip.

" Theſe plantations, if ſold, would have produced more than ſufficient to pay off the mortgages on his lordſhip's eſtate; and as his brother was acquainted with their value, he conſulted with him about diſpoſing of them. But Mr. St. Aubin recapitulated the immenſe ſums of money that his uncle had gained by keeping them, and therefore ſtrenuouſly adviſed his lordſhip to ſend a perſon over, who ſhould look after them.

" This

" This converſation had great weight with his lordſhip, and having now grown as careful as he was before extravagant, he formed the reſolution of going over and reſiding there, for the purpoſe of accumulating wealth.

" For this intent he entruſted his brother with the management of his eſtates, leaving him to pay off the mortgages out of the rents he ſhould receive ; and likewiſe, as he conſidered his ſon Frederick too young to ſuſtain the voyage, and as it was impoſſible he could receive ſo good an education there as in England, he left him alſo in his care, and failed in one of his brother's ſhips, taking his lady with him, and aſſuming the plain name of Frederick St. Aubin, thinking it rather degrading for a lord to be engaged in trade.

" He

" He ſhortly began to approve of the climate; and the large yearly produce he obtained from his plantations, which he conſtantly ſent over for his brother to diſpoſe of, inclined him to make a much longer ſtay than he otherwiſe intended; during which time he received every flattering account that a parent could wiſh concerning his ſon.

" At length, after remaining there upwards of fourteen years, he diſpoſed of the plantations to great advantage, and returned to England.

" Being anxious to behold their ſon, of whom they had received ſuch high encomiums, they immediately waited on Mr. St. Aubin. But judge how great their diſtreſs muſt have been, when he informed them, that Frederick had plunged into every vice; that he had obtained money under

under various pretences from his uncle, which he loſt at the gaming-table; that he kept various women, and had at laſt robbed his uncle of ten thouſand pounds, and ſet off with a favourite girl to America.

"I thought," continued the houſekeeper, "my lady would have died on the receipt of this intelligence; but his lordſhip endeavoured to ſupport her ſpirits, by aſſuring her he would write to ſome friends he had in America, and deſire them to advertiſe him in the papers of the different ſtates, requeſting him to return, on his father's forgiveneſs; not doubting but he ſhould by theſe means hear of him.

"My lady then ſeemed more reconciled, and would have waited patiently; but Sir William Leſley, who has an ill

opinion

opinion of my lord's brother, has filled her mind with a thousand fuspicions."

"Who is this Sir William Lefley?" faid Clariffa.

"A very worthy gentleman," replied the houfe-keeper, "and has been intimately acquainted with my lord during the chief part of the time he refided abroad. I have heard he was very poor when he firft went over, having nothing but a fmall annuity to live on; but he firft became (what is there called) an attorney to fome plantations; after which he faved money and purchafed fome land; this gained him more; and being frugal, he amaffed a tolerable fortune: but the greateft addition fell to him about fix months back, by the death of a relation, on which he came to his title and a large eftate in England.

"This made him determine to leave the Weſt Indies, and this it was that haſtened the departure of his lordſhip. But he too is very unhappy; he had a daughter in England, and juſt as he was preparing to ſail from the Weſt Indies, he received an account of her death."

A knocking was now heard at the ſtreet door.

"There is Sir William Leſley," continued the houſe-keeper: "he calls two or three times a-day, as my lord and he are very partial to each other's ſociety."

The houſe-keeper now went to attend the duties of her ſtation, and Clariſſa returned to the dreſſing-room, for the purpoſe of unpacking the trunk, and taking another view of the miniature.

CHAP. VII.

NO ſooner had Sir William Leſley entered, than Lady St. Aubin related the circumſtance of the miniatures as delivered by Clariſſa.

" It ſtrongly corroborates my ſuſpicions," rejoined Sir William: then turning to his lordſhip, " You muſt excuſe me," ſaid he, " for endeavouring to leſſen your brother in your eſtimation. I think he has not acted fairly by you. You know he is a penurious character, and they are not always the moſt honeſt."

" It would be a hard caſe indeed," replied his lordſhip, " if every penurious character were conſidered diſhoneſt."

" That

"That I admit," refumed Sir William; "but when other circumftances are brought to corroborate, it will afford ground for fufpicion.

"In the firft place, you left an old and faithful fteward to collect your rents, and account to your brother. This fteward, you find, he has difcharged many years back, and placed another in his fituation; fince which time your eftates have not realifed more than three-fourths of the fum they ufed formerly to do.

"It is alleged by him the fteward was impertinent; that the repairs have fallen heavy; and that feveral tenants eloped in debt.

"With refpect to the produce of the plantations you have yearly fent over to him, it has not netted more than three-fifths of what you expected, and what

the

the crops of other planters had netted. In excufe he pleads, damages fuftained, and the quality indifferent.

"With refpect to the money it produced, as alfo the fums yearly received from your eftates after paying off the mortgages; he has bought and fold in ftock with it, by which one fourth is loft. Unfortunately the ftocks always got up a few days after he fold out, which made him imagine they would rife higher, and therefore he bought in again; and thus it is that you have loft an immenfe fum, either through his bad management or wickednefs.

"Laftly, refpecting your fon: there is a charge of five thoufand pounds, had at various times from him; which, he fays, was fquandered in extravagance. Why did he not acquaint you of this proceed-

ing? But this fum he might have given him at various periods; and he may plead, that he did not wifh to wound your feelings.

"I fhall therefore attend to the laft charge: a grofs fum of ten thoufand pounds, faid to be taken by Frederick.

"Let me afk, where he took it from? Did he draw it from his banker's, or fell it out of ftock? What vouchers have you? what corroborative proofs does he bring to fhow he loft fo large a fum?—In fact, none. You are to rely merely on his word.

"Is it likely, if Frederick did poffefs himfelf of the fum, that he fhould fly his country? Who had he to fear? Did he dread an indulgent uncle? Is he not heir to all your property? Do you then think he would exile himfelf for a poor

ten

ten thousand pounds? a sum which is trifling, when compared to what you are worth.

"Give me leave to say, that if Mr. St. Aubin has been guilty of any nefarious practices respecting your estates and different freights, he would not stop at attempting to possess the whole, which, when Frederick is removed, he is heir to."

"You make me extremely uneasy by these suspicions," rejoined his lordship: "I ever considered my brother as a fair-dealing man, and one who studied my interest."

"It is rather surprising," resumed Sir William, "that you should think better of your brother than you do of your own son. St. Aubin taught you to believe Frederick was all that is amiable: is it

not singular that he should thus suddenly degenerate?"

"It too frequently is the case," rejoined his lordship; "when young men arrive at a certain age, they become a prey to their passions, which hurry them into excesses; and my brother perhaps, through his affection for him, was not sufficiently severe."

"It may be so," resumed Sir William; "but I should, notwithstanding, investigate the intelligence further you have received from your servant."

"I am of your opinion," rejoined Lady St. Aubin; "shall I send for her?"

"By all means," replied Sir William: and ringing the bell, requested the attendance of Lady St. Aubin's woman.

Clarissa entered.

Sir William sat in his chair, attentively surveying

furveying her, and then exclaimed in a low tone, " My God! what a refemblance!"

" What is it," faid Lady St. Aubin, in a whifper that could not be heard by Clariffa, —" what is it that attracts your notice, and throws you into this agitation?"

" Tell me," faid he, " the name of that young lady."

" I really do not know it," replied her ladyfhip; " fhe came here not an hour fince, and I have been too much engaged to think of afking her." Then turning to Clariffa, " I forgot," faid fhe, " to enquire your name."

" Maria Bentley," replied Clariffa.

Sir William fighed. " I am not altogether well," faid he; " will you permit Mifs Bentley to fetch me a glafs of water?"

Clariffa obeyed.

"Why are you thus agitated?" faid his lordfhip.

"Never," replied Sir William, "could there be a more ftriking likenefs than there is between that young lady and my deceafed wife, for whofe fake I have thus long remained a widower. Such a perfon did my nightly dreams and waking thoughts prompt me to imagine I fhould meet in my child; but death has robbed me of the chief happinefs for which I wifhed to live."

"Do not think of it," refumed his lordfhip; "you fhould recollect it is paft all remedy, and therefore fhould fupport yourfelf with fortitude."

"I have hitherto," replied Sir William, "endeavoured fo to do; but Mifs Bentley recalled fo forcibly to my memory the

recollection of my misfortunes, that, for a moment, they unmanned me. I am now conſiderably better."

Clariſſa returned.

Sir William took ſome of the water, leſt ſhe ſhould think he had given her needleſs trouble.

Lady St. Aubin requeſted ſhe would relate what [illegible] knew concerning the perſon who ſhe called Theodore Somers.

Clariſſa complied. She ſtated the forlorn ſituation in which Theodore was at the time Somers firſt beheld him, which ſhe was enabled to do from the information of Auguſta.

She then drew a picture of the benevolent character of Somers, who relieved his diſtreſs, and took him into his houſe.

"How is this!" cried Lord St. Aubin:

him: "I conceived this Theodore was a relation of Mr. Somers, as he bore the fame name."

"That name," rejoined Clariffa, "Mr. Somers gave him, as he refufed to divulge his own.

"Theodore Somers," continued fhe, "declared he had parents abroad, whom he fhortly expected home; that he had been obliged to fly from an uncle, in whofe protection he had been left, but who had abufed his truft."

"Now, my lord," cried Sir William, "what think you of this circumftance? and add to this, he was in poffeffion of your miniatures."

"It is fingular!" replied his lordfhip: "but I will thank the young woman to proceed. Let me know," continued he, "how you became acquainted with him."

"I was

" I was taught, my lord," replied Clariſſa, " to expect a higher — than what I long have moved in.

" I never knew a father; he left England before I was born; nor could I know my mother, as ſhe died ſhortly after I was brought into the world.

" My father ſent money yearly for my ſupport, by which means I received a tolerable education."

" What a remarkable ſimilarity of circumſtances!" ſaid Sir William to his lordſhip.

" Mere matter of chance," ſaid his lordſhip: then turning to Clariſſa, " What became of your father?" ſaid he.

" He loſt what he had gained, by venturing too much," replied Clariſſa; " and it was ſuppoſed he died, as the gentle-

man with wh— I was left in truſt never heard from him after.

"From this I date my misfortunes: it was not in the power of this gentleman to ſupport me, and an officer's widow, who he had ſelected to finiſh my education——"

"God of heaven!" cried Sir William, ſtarting from his chair and ſtriking his hand upon his forehead while he walked about the room.

Lord St. Aubin went to him: "You certainly forget yourſelf," ſaid he; "why do you ſuffer ſuch trifles thus to unman you?"

"I cannot help it," replied Sir William. "I beg your pardon for this interruption; requeſt Miſs Bentley to proceed."

"This

"This lady," refumed Clariffa, "provided for me out of her widow's penfion, and we lived in the neighbourhood of Mr. Somers.

"Illnefs greatly reduced her circumftances, and I took in needle-work to affift in fupporting us.

"Mr. Somers knew our poverty, and conftantly relieved us. He heard my ftory, and would not permit me to continue my employment, but fupplied every want I had, and promifed to be my protector."

"That Somers," cried Sir William, "is a worthy character, and I fhall efteem him as long as I live.

"You are now, Mifs Bentley, a child of charity; I will be to you a more than protector; a friend—a father."

Clariffa, at the mention of that endear-

ing name, drew out her handerchief to wipe away the tears that ftarted in her eyes.

Lord St. Aubin looked at Sir William with evident aftonifhment.

"It is even fo," continued Sir William; "I cannot help my feelings, it will afford me unfpeakable fatisfaction."

Clariffa teftified her gratitude for his offer, and affured him it fhould be the ftudy of her life to merit his favour.

Lady St. Aubin congratulated her on the promife fhe had received, and then requefted fhe would proceed.

Clariffa ftated how fhe became acquainted with Theodore, his being apprehended in confequence of the handbill, together with all the attendant circumftances: his affection for Mifs Freeman; his frequent declaration that he

he ſhould one day be able to prove himſelf upon an equality with her family; and concluded with the cauſes that brought both himſelf and her to London.

When Clariſſa had finiſhed, "I will go," ſaid Lord St. Aubin, "to the Glouceſter coffee-houſe immediately, in ſearch of this Theodore Somers."

"It will be of no uſe," rejoined Clariſſa. "When I went to fetch the water for Sir William, the man who had adviſed me to apply for this ſituation was waiting to ſpeak with me.

"I ſent a ſervant for the water; in the mean time he informed me, that he had enquired for Theodore, conſiſtent with my requeſt; but that he had not been there ſince I left the letter."

"That

"That is unfortunate," rejoined his lordſhip.

"Had I not better go for the letter?" reſumed Clariſſa. "It may ſerve to throw a light upon the buſineſs; and, if not, it will convince your lordſhip that what I have related is not a fiction."

"I have no doubt of its authenticity," replied his lordſhip; "but I ſhould wiſh, notwithſtanding, to ſee the letter. I will order the carriage for you."

Clariſſa replied, that ſhe ſhould be back again before the carriage could be got in readineſs, and therefore declined it.

When Clariſſa left the houſe, ſhe had an opportunity of peruſing a letter which the hair-dreſſer had brought, and which was left by Freeman at the Glouceſter coffee-houſe.

This

This letter contained ſuch an avowal of his innocence reſpecting her, that ſhe felt ſtrongly inclined to believe it; and, by the time ſhe had reached the coffee-houſe, had come to a determination of writing to Auguſta, by way of reply.

When ſhe entered the houſe, ſhe was ſurpriſed on meeting Freeman.

He had, in conſequence of Somers informing him ſhe was to be heard of at that place, offered five guineas to the waiter if he could trace her; therefore, when the hair-dreſſer called to enquire concerning Theodore, and if a letter had been ſent for Clariſſa, the waiter followed him, and obſerving him enter the houſe of Lord St. Aubin, he remained in the ſtreet while he ſhould deviſe a plan to find out if ſhe was there.

It occurred to him that he might knock at the door and ask for a fictitious name.

The porter answered the knock, and while the waiter was tiring him with questions, he beheld Clarissa coming down the stairs. This was sufficient, he instantly returned, and dispatched a letter to Freeman, who, the moment he heard Clarissa had been traced, visited the coffee-house, to pay the reward and obtain the information.

The waiter had but that minute informed him, when Clarissa entered.

She started back on observing him, and was going to retire, but he detained her: she then upbraided him with his conduct, which he in return denied; and having produced the letter Somers had sent him, it perfectly satisfied her of his innocence.

She

She apologised for her suspicions; but alleged it would be out of her power to see him again.

"Not see me!" cried Freeman; "how can you be thus deliberately cruel? I will wait on Lady St. Aubin, as I understand you have sought her protection: I will explain to her my wishes, and she will surely plead in my behalf."

Clarissa was surprised he should have heard where she was situated in so short a time.

"Her ladyship will not see you," replied she, "as I informed her it was through your means I was taken from home."

"Then it is necessary," rejoined Freeman, "that I should visit her, if it be only to vindicate my character, and I will positively attend you back."

Clarissa

Clariffa found that all refiftance would be ufelefs, Freeman declared he would accompany her; fhe therefore afked for the letter, and, as fhe was returning, acquainted him with her having affumed the name of Maria Bentley. "I fhould not wifh," continued fhe, "to be detected in a falfity; fome few days hence, perhaps, I may take an opportunity of explaining to them the reafons that made me fhelter myfelf under a borrowed name."

Freeman affured her fhe might rely on him.

Clariffa next acquainted him with the generous offers made by Sir William Lefley.

"Who is this Sir William Lefley?" cried Freeman: "I would have you beware how you accept the protection of a

ftranger.

ſtranger. By Heaven! no one ſhall protect you but myſelf. It is very ſingular, indeed, that a man you never beheld till this afternoon ſhould thus voluntarily offer his ſervices. You do not know the world, Clariſſa," continued he: "there is ſome improper motive couched under this maſk of generoſity."

"Hold!" ſaid Clariſſa; "you are injuring a worthy character: I am confident his offer proceeds from the beſt of motives."

CHAP. VIII.

BY this time they had reached the houſe.

Clariſſa requeſted he would not accompany her in; but Freeman lent a deaf ear to her entreaty, and when the porter opened the door, he deſired him to ſend a ſervant with his name to Lady St. Aubin, requeſting a few minutes' audience.

Clariſſa, finding all ſhe could ſay was of no uſe, haſtened to her ladyſhip with the letter, and acquainted her with meeting Mr. Freeman, who had inſiſted on attending her home. "He is now waiting in the hall," continued ſhe, "to ſpeak with your ladyſhip."

"What

"What can he possibly want with me?" rejoined her ladyship. "If he has acted in the manner you mentioned, I will not see him."

"Is it the same man," said Sir William, "to whom you stand indebted for your journey to London?"

"I charged it to his account," replied Clarissa; "but he pleads innocent, and brings strong corroborative proofs to show that he is so."

The servant now entered with Freeman's message.

"If your ladyship will admit him, you will oblige me," said Sir William, "as I wish to speak with him."

Lady St. Aubin desired the servant would conduct him up stairs.

Freeman entered, but was surprised on seeing two gentlemen with her ladyship.

Lady St. Aubin rofe on his entering the room, and introduced him.

"I underftand," faid Sir William, "you wifh to fpeak with her ladyfhip concerning Mifs Bentley. I have promifed to be her father, and upon this promife fhe has agreed to accept of my protection; therefore, if you have any thing to advance, I am the only perfon you can apply to."

Freeman then related the unpleafant fufpicion fhe had harboured of him, and produced the letter from Somers to prove how unfounded thofe fufpicions were.

He next, in an animated ftyle, difplayed the attachment he had for her, and the painful anxiety he had fuftained during her abfence.

"I fhall fhortly," continued he, "obtain my father's fanction for my proceedings; after which, it is my wifh that

ſhe will conſent to ſhare my name and fortune."

"Who is your father?" rejoined Sir William.

Freeman replied, by informing him of his family and connections.

"If you are related to Sir Charles Freeman," ſaid his lordſhip, "you can perhaps give me ſome information reſpecting Theodore Somers."

"I had the pleaſure of being acquainted with the gentleman you mention," replied Freeman; "and will give your lordſhip every information in my power."

"Firſt," ſaid Sir William, "I will anſwer you reſpecting the buſineſs you came upon. I ſhall, in return for the handſome and diſintereſted offer you have made, take the earlieſt opportunity of conſulting Miſs Bentley. If ſhe approves,

and

and you obtain the consent of your father, I will endeavour to bestow a fortune on her, suitable, perhaps, to the expectations of your family."

"I feel myself greatly obliged to you, for your generous intentions," replied Freeman; "but I want no fortune with her; my affection is not dictated by mercenary motives; to have the happiness of calling Miss Bentley mine is all I desire."

"This sentiment of yours," resumed Sir William, "elevates you in my estimation; but since I have promised to be a father to her, I shall consult my own dignity on the occasion: she shall not enter your family in the light of a pauper. And now, sir," continued he, "you will oblige us by relating what you know of the young gentleman."

Freeman began with the origin of their acquaintance, and continued till he mentioned the circumftance of his meeting a Mr. St. Aubin.

"What St. Aubin?" cried his lordfhip; "who is he?"

"A merchant in the city," replied Freeman, "that I accidentally met at Mrs. Seaton's, my aunt."

"I begin to fear," faid his lordfhip, turning to Sir William, "that your fufpicions were not altogether unfounded."

Freeman next related the charge that Mr. St. Aubin exhibited againft Theodore, of his taking a fum of money and the two miniatures from his employer, who brought him up as a child of charity.

"This ftory," continued Freeman, "carries a contradiction on the face of

it; for when Theodore ſupplicated the benevolence of my friend Somers, his ſhoes were nearly worn from his feet; he had not a ſhilling in his poſſeſſion, and offered to accept a menial office, as he was literally in want of bread at the time he had the miniatures in his poſſeſſion. If theſe were not the reſemblance of his parents, why did he not diſpoſe of them, or of the diamonds with which they were ſet? It ſhews the high veneration he had for them, and ſtrongly corroborates his own teſtimony."

Lady St. Aubin burſt into tears: "It was certainly my poor loſt Frederick!" ſaid ſhe. "What has not St. Aubin to anſwer for, in thus perſecuting my child who was left in his protection; he never knew what it was to be a parent!"

"How is this!" cried Freeman, aſtoniſhed.

nished. "Is it possible that Theodore Somers can be your son?"

"I am afraid," rejoined his lordship, "it is too true."

Freeman approached Lady St. Aubin: "Compose yourself," said he; "Theodore is safe, and somewhere under the protection of his friend, Mr. Somers."

"Ah!" cried his lordship, "tell me quickly what reason you have for so saying."

Freeman proceeded. He related the circumstance of Theodore being taken by the men in the presence of Augusta; his own suspicions; his waiting on the Jew in consequence, and the conversation that passed.

"What Jew is that?" said his lordship.

"His name," replied Freeman, "is Isaac Solomon; and if I may judge from what he told me, he possesses the heart of a Christian."

"You have been imposed on," said his lordship: "I have heard of the fellow; he is the man who transacts my brother's business—if a brother he may be called. Solomon would not venture to lose his favour by rescuing my unfortunate boy."

"I beg your lordship's pardon," said Freeman; "I am inclined to think otherwise: he it was that led me to suspect Mr. Somers knew of Theodore, which prompted me to write to him, and I received this in reply."—

Freeman now read that part of the letter from Somers which assured him that Theodore was safe, but in secresy.

"If,"

" If," said his lordship, " Theodore is really my son, I know not how I shall be able to reward Mr. Somers for his humanity."

" He possesses," resumed Freeman, " sufficient for all the comforts of life; and you would wound his feelings by a proposal of that nature. It will amply repay him to know he has been the means of rendering a fellow-creature happy."

" You have so far roused my feelings, and excited my curiosity, by this relation respecting Theodore," resumed his lordship, " that I will take the earliest opportunity of visiting Mr. Somers: but first I will see St. Aubin. It is now too late to call on him, as he has no doubt gone to his country house, where I understand he sleeps every night; but I will be with

 him

him to-morrow, and try if I can difcover in his countenance any token of guilt."

"If I may be allowed to advife," rejoined Freeman, "it is, that you would firft vifit the Jew."

"By no means," replied his lordfhip; "that Jew would put St. Aubin on his guard. Reft affured, wherever a Jew is concerned, there is fome nefarious practice at the bottom."

Sir William joining with his lordfhip, Freeman's advice was overruled.

Clariffa was now preparing to leave the room; but Lady St. Aubin approached her, and taking her hand, "You muft not leave us," faid fhe; "you are now the adopted daughter of Sir William: I fhall be proud to place you amongft the number of my friends:" and then infifted on

her

her taking a chair befide her, which Clariffa, in confequence of her importunity, was obliged to accept.

Lord St. Aubin defired Freeman would fpend the evening with him, and Sir William at the fame time joining in the requeft, he readily confented, flattering himfelf he fhould have an opportunity of paffing a few moments with Clariffa unaccompanied by her friends, as his heart overflowed with an ecftafy he wifhed to relate. But no fuch opportunity offered; each were too deeply engaged in their enquiries refpecting Theodore; his manner, addrefs, accomplifhments of perfon, and underftanding: to all which enquiries Freeman gave fuch anfwers as raifed their expectations to the higheft pitch.

At the hour of twelve Freeman took his leave, and returned to his aunt's.

He concluded Augusta would have retired to rest, as she intended setting off early on the following morning with Mrs. Somers for Cliffdown-lodge; but expected to find Mrs. Seaton up, to whom he intended relating the success he had met with.

When he entered the room he was surprised on beholding his father, as he had no suspicion of his being in town.

Freeman, who was at all times happy to see him, ran towards him to testify the pleasure this unexpected meeting afforded; but was checked by the unusual severity that appeared in his countenance.

"First," said his father, "answer me, what is it that has occasioned your visit to town?—Is it true, that you have come to a determination of intro-

ducing a miferable cottager into my family?"

Freeman was confounded at the ftern manner in which his father addreffed him, and could not articulate a reply; but hefitated.

"It will be of no ufe to deny it," refumed his father; "I have received a letter from my brother, Sir Charles, informing me of the whole particulars; and my fifter has likewife, confiftent with her duty to me and affection for you, acquainted me with what has come to her knowledge. You will therefore render yourfelf more deferving of my favour by a candid confeffion than by prevarication or denial. I promife you I will attend to any thing you can plead in extenuation of your folly."

Freeman replied to the charge, that he

had always taught him to believe he ſhould be left to the free and unbiaſſed exerciſe of his judgment in the choice of a partner.

He then deſcanted on the merits of Clariſſa, and related the ſtory he had learnt from Somers; concluding with the adventure of the evening, and Sir William Leſley having adopted her.

This relation in ſome meaſure pacified the father. "I ſhall viſit this nonpareil," ſaid he, "and ſhall likewiſe have ſome converſation with Sir William. Pray, is he related to her? The name being the ſame, and your aſſertion that ſhe ſprings from an ancient family in the north of England, who I am diſtantly acquainted with, together with a combination of circumſtances, prompts the enquiry."

"I do not believe they are related," replied

replied Freeman; "but you will oblige me by mentioning the circumſtances you allude to."

"I knew a Sir Henry Leſley," reſumed the elder Freeman. "He had only one brother, and to the beſt of my recollection, his name was William.

"This brother went over to the Weſt Indies, leaving his wife pregnant, who was ſhortly after delivered of a daughter, and died.

"This circumſtance of Miſs Leſley ſo far correſponding, induced me to put the queſtion."

"Her father," rejoined Freeman, "has been dead for ſome years: they may, notwithſtanding, be diſtantly related; but it has been out of the power of Sir William to inveſtigate it, as ſhe, to avoid the perſon who conveyed her from home, has

taken up the name of Maria Bentley, by which name only ſhe is known to him."

"She muſt explain that circumſtance," reſumed the father: "the name of Leſley not being common in the North, it may poſſibly turn out as I ſuſpect."

Freeman ſignified his intention of viſiting Clariſſa in the morning, and requeſted his father would do him the favour to accompany him.

This being agreed upon, they retired to reſt.

CHAP. IX.

ON the following morning, after breakfaſt, Sir William taking Clariſſa by the hand, "Miſs Bentley," ſaid he, "I wiſh to have a few minutes' converſation with you."

Having adjourned to another apartment, "From the firſt moment I beheld you," continued he, "I felt for you the affection of a parent. As your mother was left, ſo did I leave my wife; as your mother died, ſo died my poor Clariſſa; as you were left in truſt, and to the care of a gentleman, ſo was my child left, and juſt ſuch a daughter as you appear did I fondly hope to meet on my return to England:

land: but death has deprived me of that happineſs.

"The ſimilarity of theſe circumſtances, together with the ſtrong reſemblance your features bear to her's who ſhared my heart, and whoſe memory muſt be ever dear to me, account, perhaps, in part for the ſenſations I felt when I firſt beheld you, and for the promiſe I have made.

"I am now going to fulfil a part of that promiſe, by conſulting your happineſs. Mr. Freeman, if the account he gives of his family and fortune be correct, is ſo far unexceptionable. But you are now to take into your conſideration, that you are the daughter of Sir William Leſley, and not an unprotected orphan; do not therefore permit his ſituation in life to have the ſmalleſt weight with you. If he really has an intereſt in your heart,

take

take him; but if not, the fortune I am able, and will beftow on you, fhall be a fufficient recommendation, and fuch as will entitle you to expect his equal.

"Having made the preliminary obfervations, anfwer me, in return, one queftion with candour.

"Is Mr. Freeman the object of your choice?"

Clariffa blufhed and hefitated.

"If I may judge," continued Sir William, "from the confufion betrayed in your countenance, he certainly is. But why are you afraid to fpeak to me? What can I fay, or what act can I do, that will teach you to look upon me as your father?"

"Oh, Sir William," rejoined Clariffa, "my heart is almoft too full for utterance!

ance!—You oppreſs me by your abundant generoſity!"

"Generoſity!" cried Sir William; "what a ſentiment is that!—Are you not my daughter?"

"Oh Heaven!" exclaimed Clariſſa, burſting into tears; "you teach me by your goodneſs the loſs I have ſuſtained in the death of my parent!—but which loſs you amply replace."

"It ſhall be the ſtudy of my life ſo to do," rejoined Sir William. "I cannot endure that you ſhould look upon me as your benefactor. I hope to merit a far more endearing title; therefore, anſwer my queſtion as you would anſwer your father."

Clariſſa, oppreſſed with the kindneſs manifeſted by Sir William, felt aſhamed that

that ſhe ſhould have impoſed on him with a borrowed name, and was firſt preparing to ſolicit his forgiveneſs for ſo doing, when the names of Freeman ſenior and junior were announced; and Lady St. Aubin entered the room to aſk if Sir William would ſee them.

"By all means," replied Sir William: then turning to Clariſſa, "You have not anſwered my queſtion," ſaid he.

"There is no occaſion," replied Clariſſa, "your penetration has diſcovered all I had to tell you."

"Why then," cried Sir William, "Freeman and you ſhall be one, if my fortune be able to procure it."

Clariſſa ventured to preſs his hand, while the tears that ſtood in her eyes betokened the feelings of a grateful heart.

Sir

Sir William returned the preſſure :— "Come, child," ſaid he, "you muſt go with me; "I will ſhew Freeman's father what an amiable daughter I have to preſent him."

Clariſſa accompanied him.

Lord and Lady St. Aubin were in converſation with the younger Freeman, and would have withdrawn; but Sir William prevented them.

"I waited upon you," ſaid the elder Freeman, "at the particular requeſt of my ſon, and in conſequence of a converſation that took place between you yeſterday evening reſpecting a young lady, who, he informs me, is under your protection."

"I have not only taken Miſs Bentley under my protection," rejoined Sir William, "but——"

"I beg your pardon," ſaid the elder Freeman, interrupting him, "the young lady's name is not Bentley."

"Permit me," ſaid Freeman, "as I am acquainted with the circumſtance, to inform Sir William.

"That young lady, who paſſes for Miſs Bentley, is deſcended from a titled family, and thought ſhe might give an offence to ſome branch of it if ſhe entered into a ſtate of ſervitude in her own name; ſhe further imagined I had treated her improperly, and therefore, to ſcreen herſelf the more effectually from my knowledge, aſſumed the name of Maria Bentley. My father wiſhes this circumſtance to be explained, as he conjectures there may be a relationſhip exiſting between you."

"I ſhould be happy to find it ſo," rejoined

joined Sir William. My family is not extenſive, and if you will rehearſe the grounds you have for ſuch conjecture, I ſhall be able no doubt to ſatisfy you."

Freeman began by relating what Somers had informed him; but when he came to that part wherein he obſerved ſhe was left in the care of a Mr. Morris—

"Heavenly God!" cried Sir William, "whither would you lead me!—Morris!—With a perſon of that name I left my wife, and afterwards to his care aſſigned my daughter."

Then haſtening to Clariſſa, and taking hold of her hand, "Tell me, child," ſaid he, "and eaſe this diſtracting ſtate of ſuſpenſe, who are your relations, and what is your name?"

Clariſſa, who was feelingly alive to what had paſſed, was ſcarcely able to

articulate

articulate a reply, till recovering herſelf, "My uncle was Sir Henry Leſley," ſaid ſhe: "I am Clariſſa Leſley."

"Now I am indeed a parent!" cried Sir William; and, unable to ſuſtain his feelings, ſunk on a chair.

Lord St. Aubin ran to his aſſiſtance.

"I ſhall be better in a minute," ſaid Sir William faintly: "where is my daughter?—let me fold her to my heart!"

Clariſſa, whom this event had for a minute deprived of ſenſe and motion, and who was ſupported by Lady St. Aubin and Freeman, began to revive.

"Compoſe yourſelf," ſaid Freeman; "Sir William is your father!—let me conduct you to him."

Clariſſa, by his aſſiſtance, threw herſelf upon her father's neck, while Sir William

preſt

preſt her to him, and ſpent a moment in unutterable felicity.

But Clariſſa nearly relapſing again, Lady St. Aubin prevailed on her to quit the room, while ſhe endeavoured to regain her ſpirits.

"Father of Mercies!" cried Sir William, and lifting up his eyes towards Heaven, "how wonderful is thy providence!"

"Wonderful indeed!" rejoined Lord St. Aubin. "Had not your daughter been taken from her home in the country, which has given her ſo much uneaſineſs, it is probable ſhe never would have known a father, or you have been bleſſed with a daughter: and thus it is, while we are too frequently lamenting our lot, and complaining againſt the ſeverity of

fate,

fate, our Creator is imperceptibly leading us on to happineſs."

"To happineſs indeed!" rejoined Sir William. "To find my daughter ſtill in exiſtence, who I was taught to believe was dead, is a pleaſure I could not have expected. But what could induce Morris to act upon this principle? It is to me aſtoniſhing. I regularly ſent him over remittances more than ſufficient for her ſupport and education, which remittances I have his letters to acknowledge the receipt of."

"I judge how it is," ſaid Lord St. Aubin: "you informed me, on the firſt day you landed, on enquiring for him you heard he had failed ſome years back; ſince which time, depend upon it, he has found it neceſſary to keep the money for his own uſe, reſting ſatisfied ſhe would

find

find a proteĉtreſs in the officer's widow. This is what made him acquaint your daughter that you were no more; and being aſhamed to meet you after thus betraying his truſt, fearing likewiſe leſt you ſhould diſcover the villany of his conduct and puniſh him, when he gained intelligence of your coming to England, he informed you ſhe was dead."

"His lordſhip is certainly right," rejoined the elder Freeman; "but how deliberately cruel muſt that man's heart be, who could thus expoſe your daughter to want! I would find him out, and make him ſuffer for his conduct."

"As my daughter is thus happily reſtored," replied Sir William, "I ſhall take no coercive ſteps againſt him; but leave him to receive his puniſhment from a higher power."

This

This converſation was put an end to by the entrance of Clariſſa, who again threw herſelf into the arms of her father.

Freeman next approached to congratulate her.

" Mr. Freeman," ſaid Sir William, " I have had ſome converſation with my daughter concerning your propoſal; but I cannot obtain a reply in your favour."

Freeman appeared diſconcerted, and ſent a petitioning look towards Clariſſa; who anſwered with a ſmile, at the ſame time preſſing his hand, which was joined to hers.

" I hope you are wrong," rejoined Freeman; " I can read no diſapprobation in her countenance."

" Perhaps," reſumed Sir William, " you can plead better in your own behalf than I can plead for you; I ſhall therefore

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARAS

give you permiffion to prefer your fuit, not doubting but your father will approve your conduct."

"I know not why I fhould difapprove," rejoined the elder Freeman: "I came here this morning for the purpofe of giving it my fanction, when I did not know to what family the young lady belonged: reft affured I fhall be proud and happy in the alliance."

Lord St. Aubin now requefted they would excufe him, as he had waited rather beyond the time he expected his brother would arrive in town. I fhall therefore leave the party to the enjoyment of each other's company, while I attend his lordfhip.

He did not wait for his carriage being got in readinefs, but purfued his way on foot.

When

When he reached the houſe a ſervant was anſwering a perſon at the door, and would have conducted him, but his lordſhip ſaying there was no occaſion, he was ſuffered to proceed alone, and entered a room where he had been the day before.

Finding no perſon in this room, and hearing his brother's voice in an adjoining apartment, he was preparing to enter it, but was prevented in conſequence of ſome words that reached his ear; he therefore placed himſelf by the door, while he attended to the following converſation:

"Are you certain," cried St. Aubin, "the ſhip has failed?"

"Poſitive," replied Iſaac Solomon.

"Why then he is ſafe enough," rejoined St. Aubin; "and as my brother has no ſuſpicion, all will be well."

"I varrant he ifh fhafe," rejoined the Jew; "I faw de young fhentleman put into de hold; he vill foon find his vay to Africa."

"Did you tell the mafter of the veffel," refumed St. Aubin, "that he was a wild, extravagant fellow, and fometimes deranged in his mind?"

"Yefh," replied Solomon, "I told him all about it: befhide, de mafhter of de vefhel ifh my vriend; he vill tell no tales, but vill land him on fome unfrequented part of de coafhit."

The heart of Lord St. Aubin now funk within him; but recollecting the letter from Somers, which affured Freeman he was fafe, and concluding there was fome myftery in it, he refolved to compofe his fpirits, and attend further to the recital.

"My brother returned too ſoon," reſumed St. Aubin: "I could have wiſhed to diſpoſe of the freights which have come to hand without his knowledge."

"Come, come," rejoined the Jew, "you have made no bad ting of it; vat wid de eſtate, and vat wid de freights, it vill put ſhixty or ſheventy touſand pounds in your vay; and den de boy being gone, you are de heir."

"Can you blame me?" reſumed St. Aubin: "I am no friend to the law that delivers every thing to an elder brother, and leaves the younger to ſtarve. What I have by my ingenuity taken from my brother is trifling, compared to what the law gave him."

"You tink as all younger broders do," rejoined the Jew, "and I tink ſo too: I am no vriend to de old ſhaying, dat

'Honeshty ish de besht polishee.' It may be sho ven it ish de besht polishee to be honesht; ash, for inshtance, vere by fair dealing wid a scrutinishing employer ve hope to retain his favour; den it ish de besht polishee to be honesht: but ven it ish oderwise, it vould be madness to tink of it; vor shelf-preshervation ish de firsht law of nature. Dat ish my creed."

"And a very good one too," cried St. Aubin; "you will find it pay you an eighth on all the extra gains in this business."

Lord St. Aubin now considered what plan was best to pursue: he had no witnesses to this conversation, and if he entered and accused them they might deny it; for this reason he changed his mind, and determined on examining the Jew separately. With this intent he retired unobserved from the room, and leaving

the houſe, waited at the corner of the ſtreet till the Jew ſhould return.

He had not been long in this ſituation before the Jew approached, and Lord St. Aubin, ſmothering his reſentment, accoſted him with "Good-morning, Mr. Solomon; I have a ſum idle at preſent, which I wiſh you to buy into the ſtocks for me."

The Jew profeſſed himſelf obliged, and aſked him who had the goodneſs to recommend him.

"Mr. St. Aubin," replied his lordſhip.

"Mr. Sht. Aubin is a very vorthy ſhentleman," rejoined the Jew.

A converſation now took place concerning the ſtocks and money matters in general till they arrived at his lordſhip's houſe; they then went up ſtairs, where was aſſembled the ſame party as before.

No fooner had they reached the room than his lordfhip, who had now no further occafion to diffemble, feized the Jew by his collar: "Villain!" cried he, "look on me: I am the Lord St. Aubin. Does not your foul fhudder at the fight of me?"

"No—upon my fhoul it dofh not," replied Solomon: "I am very glad to fee you, and did intend to do myfhelf de honour of vifhiting you dis evening."

"Tell me," cried his lordfhip, ftill holding him by his collar, "where is my fon?"

"I beg you vill leave your hold," refumed Solomon; "I cannot talk vhile you pull me about."

Sir William now approached, and put the fame queftion; which Lord St. Aubin again repeated.

"Do

"Do not talk altogeder," rejoined Solomon: "I have two ears, but I have only von head; derefore I can attend to but von at a time. Your ſhon is very ſhafe."

"Yes, villain Jew!" cried his lordſhip, "I overheard you at St. Aubin's, and know all your infamous practices; but wherever any thing abominable is to be carried on, a Jew is ſure to have a hand in it."

"De Jews are very muſh obliſhed to your lordſhip," replied Solomon; "but if you did overhear, you might have known dere be rogues among de Chriſtians as vell as de Jews, for dey vill ſheat dere own broder. You ſhould ſhudge wid more ſharity: dere be goot Jews and goot Chriſhtians: a remnant of all vill be ſhaved."

Freeman now approached, and requested his lordſhip would leave his hold. " Let the Jew ſpeak," ſaid he ; " you do but interrupt him, and perhaps are treating ill one of your beſt friends."

" A Jew the friend of a Chriſtian !" rejoined his lordſhip ; " that is contrary to common ſenſe."

" It iſh plain," rejoined Solomon, " dat de Chriſhtian iſh no vriend to de poor Jew ; but if you vill have patience, you ſhall ſhudge vither I have not been a vriend to your lordſhip."

The Jew being now at liberty—

" I can make very great allowanſhes for your conduct," continued he ; " de feelings of a parent plead in your behalf. Your ſhon is ſhafe, wid a Mr. Shomers, at Cliffdown-lodge, near Briſtol."

Lady St. Aubin now ran to him; ſhe preſſed his hand while the tears were burſting from her eyes, and thanked him for the intelligence.

"How am I," ſaid his lordſhip, "to reconcile this with what I overheard at St. Aubin's?"

"Vould you have had me loſe my vriend before dere vaſh occaſhion? He iſh my employer; he doſh not vant honeſht men to do hiſh vork, derefore I vaſh obliſhed to aſhume de rogue. But have a little patience, and you ſhall hear."

Then taking a bundle of papers from his pocket, and ſeating himſelf by a table, "Do not interrupt me," ſaid he, "and I vill relate de whole."

CHAP. X.

HAVING unfolded the papers, he delivered himſelf as follows, excepting the ſtyle of expreſſion.

"I have been employed by Mr. St. Aubin, your brother, ever ſince he commenced merchant.

"In the courſe of my dealings for him, I found that he approved of gaining fifty per cent in preference of five, and never failed ſo to do where he had an opportunity.

"It is the cuſtom of every man in trade to pleaſe his employer; as ſuch, in all argument, I took the unfair ſide of the queſtion. This inclined your brother to place in me unlimited confidence; through

this

this I became acquainted with his nefarious practices refpecting you.

"I have been the perfon employed to difpofe of your different freights, and by thefe papers you will learn what they netted, to the fraction of a farthing. Thefe you can compare with what your brother has or will produce, and make him account for the difference.

"To me likewife he entrufted the purchafe of all your money in the ftocks, and as it was bought in in your name, I was at all times able to diftinguifh it from his.

"Here is likewife an account of what was gained by fuch purchafe, or by felling out.

"Thefe other papers (pointing to another parcel), relate to your eftates.

"The old fteward you left there would not

not ſuit his purpoſe; he kept a book for your inſpection when you ſhould return, and was on that account diſcharged.

"I acquainted your brother that I had a man who would be happy to undertake the office, and on whoſe fidelity he might depend.

"This man was bound to me by ſervices I had rendered him.

"From this man I have received an account annually of the ſums he paid Mr. St. Aubin, and at the times he paid them; which you will find regularly put down in theſe papers, and which you can compare with the accounts from your brother.

"Laſtly, reſpecting your ſon:—

"When he came from the univerſity, he conſidered it a duty incumbent on him to look into and examine the conduct of

St.

St. Aubin, as far as related to your property, having a fuſpicion he did not deal fairly by you.

" He took minutes of ſeveral nefarious tranſactions.

" St. Aubin grew ſuſpicious on account of the many queſtions he put to him, and on privately ſearching his portmanteau, he found thoſe minutes.

" From this period he devoted him to deſtruction.

" He acquainted me of the diſcovery, as likewiſe that it was his intention to ſend him to the coaſt of Africa. Alarmed at this intelligence, I requeſted your ſon would return to the univerſity.

" When he teaſed me with queſtions concerning my reaſons for giving ſuch advice, I hinted to him that his uncle had

had laid a plan to fend him out of the country.

" Two or three days after this, St. Aubin called at my houfe, informed me he had fettled his plan, and that your fon would be on board the fhip in lefs than twenty-four hours.

" In the utmoft anxiety I wrote a few lines to Frederick, defiring him inftantly to quit his uncle's houfe, and inform me of his refidence.

" This note I fent by a trufty fervant, who found an opportunity of delivering it to him in private.

" Your fon followed my advice, and St. Aubin was outrageous at his abfence.

" He informed me the poor boy had taken the miniatures of his parents, but that he had neither taken money nor a change of clothes."

The

The Jew was now interrupted by Lady St. Aubin, who could not help burſting into tears at the recital of this mark of affection in her ſon towards his parents.

After a little time Soloman was ſuffered to proceed.

"Your ſon," ſaid he, "I am afraid, was of the ſame opinion as his father; he did not think proper to truſt a Jew, as he never acquainted me with his reſidence, therefore I had no means of ſending him money; but it was not long before I heard of him.

"St. Aubin publiſhed a hand-bill, offering a reward to any one who would reſtore him, and directing them to apply to his attorney.

"Fearful leſt Frederick ſhould again be in his power, I made an acquaintance with the attorney's clerk, and by the help

help of money engaged him in my intereſt.

"His employer was out of town when a letter came to his hands, informing him where your ſon was to be found. This letter he forwarded to me, and I inſtantly diſpatched a truſty meſſenger to caution him, leſt he ſhould be taken; but your ſon had left the place when the meſſenger arrived.

"From that time I heard no more of him till St. Aubin acquainted me that a young lady your ſon highly eſteemed had given him ſuch intelligence as enabled him to trace him to the Glouceſter coffee-houſe.

"Being anxious for his ſafety, I voluntarily offered my ſervices to take him, and alleged I had a friend who would convey him to the coaſt of Africa, or

throw

throw him overboard if required. 'God forbid,' replied St. Aubin, 'that I ſhould take his life, all I deſire is, to ſend him out of the way, and have already hired ſome men to way-lay him.'

"I obtained information who theſe men were, and met them in company with St. Aubin, who deſired them to attend to my inſtructions.

"When St. Aubin was gone, I aſked them what gratuity they were to receive, and found they were to have a hundred pounds amongſt them.

"St. Aubin had informed them your ſon was extravagant, and he wiſhed to ſend him to his father in the Weſt Indies.

"I explained the circumſtance, and by giving as much more as St. Aubin had

had promifed, prevailed on them to relinquifh their purpofe.

" The men declared they would take the young gentleman, and convey him where I thought proper: after which they would call on St. Aubin for his promifed hundred.

" I concluded this action would bind them to fecrefy, and therefore advifed it.

" They then went to the Gloucefter coffee-houfe, and were informed he had left the place not a minute before.

" The waiter at their requeft, as they pleaded urgent bufinefs, walked with them to the corner of Bond-ftreet, and pointed him out.

" The men obferved him; but as there was a crowd of people, they were obliged to wait; at length they took him

as

as he was ſpeaking to a lady, and putting him into a coach, one of them came to my houſe, and informed me of their ſucceſs, and that he had deſired the coachman to take a circuit, and come round to a houſe at Iſlington.

" I had indiſpenſable buſineſs that prevented me from attending; but ſent a confidential friend, who, at my requeſt, deſired him to return to Mr. Somers.

" This advice he promiſed to take, and I have no doubt but he is there in ſafety.

" Theſe circumſtances I intended relating to you this day, and for which purpoſe I ſat up the beſt part of laſt night, arranging the papers for your inſpection."

" What acknowledgment can I make to you," cried Lord St. Aubin, " for thus

intereſting

interesting yourself in my concerns, and preserving my son from the power of a monster?"

"Vat!" cried the Jew; "let me consider:—You shall acknowledge dere ish shome honeshty to be found in a Jew ash vell as in a Chrishtian; dat is all de acknowledgment I vant: I take no brokerage in affairs of dis nature."

"Accept this ring," said his lordship, taking one from his finger and presenting it; "receive it as a token of my friendship, and of my intention to bestow a reward on you, suitable to the services you have rendered."

"Dere may," replied the Jew, "be shome excuse in receiving a revard for a bad action; but for a goot von dere cannot; dat revards itshelf. I have got a light heart, and am perfectly shatisfied."

A ser-

A ſervant now entered, and announced Mr. St. Aubin.

" Shew him up," ſaid his lordſhip.

" Had I not better get out of de vay?" ſaid the Jew.

" By no means," ſaid his lordſhip; " let the guilty be aſhamed: that does not appear to be your caſe."

St. Aubin entered, and ſtarted back on ſeeing the Jew.

Lord St. Aubin walked to the door of the apartment, and having ſhut it, turned to St. Aubin, and, with a ſtern aſpect, demanded of him what he had done with his ſon?

St. Aubin heſitated for a minute; but aſſuming courage, " Can I," ſaid he, " be accountable for the wild follies of youth?"

" I aſk you not," cried his lordſhip, " to

" to be accountable for his follies, but for your own villany."

" Villany!" repeated St. Aubin: " you perhaps think a lord may uſe theſe terms with impunity to a merchant of London; but permit me to remind you, that you are not now in a land of ſlaves, nor is a merchant to be chaſtiſed as a common negro; neither do I feel inclined to bear with it."

" You muſt bear with this, and much more," rejoined his lordſhip. " I have a high reſpect for the character of Britiſh merchants; they are an ornament to the nation, and ſecond in reſpectability to none: but it would be ſingular in ſuch an extenſive body of men if there were not one to be found who could act with villany—that one is yourſelf!"

His lordſhip next recapitulated the in-

formation

formation of the Jew, on which he paraphrafed with energy and feeling; and concluded by informing him he fhould appoint an attorney to fettle his accounts, which muft agree with the ftatement delivered by Solomon, or he would find a way to compel him.

St. Aubin, confounded at the recital, and afhamed of being detected before fo many witneffes, requefted his brother would ufe precaution to prevent its publicity, and promifed to account with him to the utmoft farthing. After which he craved permiffion to withdraw.

Lord St. Aubin affured him, if he found his accounts correct, he would ftudy to oblige him by keeping the fecret, but not otherwife.

He then accompanied him to the door, and fhewed him the fame degree of at-

tention as if nothing unpleasant had occurred.

It was now proposed by Lady St. Aubin to visit Mr. Somers immediately, in search of her son; but the elder Freeman, who had visited London merely for the purpose of investigating Edward's conduct, offering to accompany them if they would defer their journey till the morning, they agreed so to do.

Sir William Lesley signified his intention of joining in the party: "My daughter," said he, "will take a pleasure in introducing me to her friend and benefactor."

Freeman, finding Clarissa was to accompany her father, requested he might likewise be permitted to attend.

Lord St. Aubin endeavoured to prevail on Solomon to accept of a seat in his

carriage;

carriage; but he pleaded indifpenfable bufnefs, and therefore, after receiving the warmeft acknowlegments, and having promifed to vifit them on their return, was permitted to depart.

The refidue of the day was occupied in preparing for their journey, and poft-horfes were ordered to be at the door by nine in the morning, his lordfhip intending to travel chief part of the way on the firft day, fo that he might with eafe reach Mr. Somers's by the following afternoon.

I fhall now leave them to put their intentions in practice, while I return to Cliffdown-lodge and its vicinity.

CHAP. XI.

DURING the time Sir Charles was returning home from Cliffdown-lodge, in company with his daughter, he appeared unuſually thoughtful, ſcarcely uttering a ſentence, unleſs it was by way of reply.

When he reached his houſe, he deſired Auguſta would attend him, as he wiſhed to have ſome converſation with her.

Auguſta having followed him and ſeated herſelf—

" I am totally at a loſs," ſaid he, " to account for the return of that young fellowwhocalls himſelf Theodore. Notwithſtanding his innocence appears manifeſt reſpecting the elopement of the young

woman from the cottage, it does not follow that he is innocent of another charge laid againſt him, which is, that of inſulting my family, by venturing to addreſs you; and which I have a ſtrong ſuſpicion he means to perſevere in.

" I am perfectly acquainted with your romantic ideas concerning him, and know they had their origin in Mr. Somers. He is a man far too much inclined to view the fair ſide of the picture, and nothing that I could advance would alter his opinion. He conceives the young man to be your equal, and frankly told me, he did not imagine the addreſſes of Theodore ought to be looked upon as an inſult to my family.

" So then a needy, proſcribed adventurer, without a ſhoe to his foot, or a guinea in his purſe, preſenting himſelf

under a borrowed name, and refusing, through shame, to give any account of his family or connections, because he tells a varnished tale that creates commiseration, is to be believed, and I am told his addresses to my daughter is not an insult!

"Mr. Somers has in some measure atoned for his folly (which, I believe, he blushes at the recollection of), by assuring me you will not again be troubled with his company, unless I think proper to request the contrary, which I certainly shall not.

"Upon this promise, so far as relates to Somers, I rely; but it will be out of his power to prevent it, if you are determined to meet him.

"I confess," continued Sir Charles, "I should not have suspected you would again wish to renew an acquaintance

with

with him, had I not obferved the evident confufion betrayed by your countenance when he met you in the temple, and the defire there appeared on your part to enter into a converfation with him, as likewife the mortification you feemed to feel when he left you rather abruptly: this it is which inclines me to think you wifh for an interview with him.

" There was likewife a few words fell from him at that time, which conveyed a reproach to you for fome conduct you had manifefted towards him; after which you drew Mrs. Somers from our company, no doubt to have a converfation refpecting him, or to fend fome meffage by her.

" Anfwer me, therefore, if my fufpicions are true, and let your anfwer be

dictated by candour and without hesitation."

Augusta knew not what reply to make. She found, however her father's penetration might have misled him heretofore, it had not erred in this particular.

She felt ashamed to confess her sentiments in behalf of a person whom nobody knew; and therefore replied, that Theodore having been introduced as a friend of Mr. Somers, she considered him so far entitled to respect; that she at present appeared in an unfavourable light both to him and Mr. Somers, in consequence of her having inadvertently mentioned the place where he was to be found to a person who knew his uncle, and whom she met by accident in the company of Edward.

"To

"To remove this apparent contemptible conduct in me," continued Augusta, "I certainly wish for an opportunity of explaining the circumstance."

"If that be all," resumed Sir Charles, "you can explain it to Mr. Somers, which will be equally the same; and I would have you visit him in the morning for that purpose: but let me warn you not to speak with Theodore. I cannot submit to an acquaintance being kept up with so suspicious a character; and I insist, if he should attempt again to insinuate himself into your favour, that you will give him such an answer as shall prevent a similar insult in future, and put a stop to such unwarrantable and audacious liberties."

Augusta replied, she was confident he

would not attempt it; and if he did, ſhe would recollect the advice given her.

With this aſſurance Sir Charles reſted ſatisfied.

On the enſuing morning Auguſta aroſe early, for the purpoſe of enjoying a walk. Every idea being centered in Theodore, her ſteps naturally inclined towards the ſpot where he reſided.

Theodore had ariſen with the ſame intention. He had not heard any explanation of Auguſta's conduct, Mrs. Somers not having had it in her power to ſpeak with her huſband alone during the preceding evening.

Theodore, notwithſtanding the apparent coolneſs he manifeſted when laſt with Auguſta, was far from feeling a reſentful ſentiment againſt her; and although his

pride had prompted him to write a letter to her, dictated as it was, yet did his heart recoil at the recollection of the words it conveyed; but no other alternative presented itself to him.

He had been treated with a coolness bordering upon insult; had been suspected of what his soul abhored; and, in addition to this, concluded she sought to do him a serious injury. Still he could not help reflecting how lovely Augusta appeared to him when he first beheld her, and how dear she was still to his memory.

When he arose in the morning he walked into the garden, and viewed the spot where she was seated on the preceding day. "There," cried he, "did I deliver that fatal letter. In that place did I voluntarily resign my hopes, and with it

nearly all that can render my life desirable."

He next blamed himself for the unnecessary haste he had made use of.

"I should have paused," continued he, "before I ventured on such a procedure; where my future happiness was so much concerned. I should have endeavoured to learn if her sentiments remained as formerly. On the contrary, or my vanity deceived me, I read reconciliation on her countenance; she even congratulated me on my return to this place. Is it then possible she can possess so much art as to appear happy on my return, after she had strove to prevent it?

"When I delivered the letter, was she not all confusion?—her countenance covered with a modest blush, while her eyes spoke the lively affection of her heart.—

Yet

Yet hold!" cried he, "ſhe might be happy on ſeeing me here, as it would afford her an opportunity of again informing St. Aubin. She might bluſh at my approach through the recollection of her conduct, and was it not natural that ſhe ſhould?"

Theſe ideas having ſilenced the former: "I will no longer," ſaid he, "continue viſiting the places where laſt I ſaw her, and by this conduct encourage an affection which my reaſon bids me conquer: I will walk, and enjoy the beauty of the morning."

Theodore did not reflect how incapable he was of attending to reaſon, while his heart was a ſlave to an unconquerable attachment; for no ſooner had he left the garden than he purſued the way that led to Sir Charles's.

"Yes," cried he, "I will once more view the place that contains the too lovely but cruel Augufta, and take a final farewel leave of it."

With this intent he walked up the hill till he difcovered the houfe, and then leaning againft an old tree that ftood a little out of the path, "There," faid he, "within thofe walls perhaps fleeps my Augufta, her heart a ftranger to thofe forrows I am doomed to feel. Not only unmindful of my fufferings was fhe, but, dictated by cruelty, fhe wifhed to facrifice the object that adored her."

Thefe reflections forced a tear from his eye, which he drew out his handkerchief to wipe away.

Augufta had now reached the place, and beheld in filence the agony of mind that was depicted on his countenance.

Her

Her affection for him, the ſituation in which he had planted himſelf, and the object he was viewing, prompted her to think ſhe was the ſole occaſion of the tears which ſhe ſaw ſtanding in his eyes. Auguſta approached nearer, for the purpoſe of accoſting him, but he was wrapt up in contemplation, and did not obſerve her.

She ſtood for a minute, while he heaved a heavy ſigh; then caſting his eyes once more towards the houſe, "Ah, Auguſta!" cried he, "dear to my heart!—farewell! —the recollection of you muſt for ever torture my exiſtence!"

Auguſta could no longer ſupport her fortitude, or witneſs this ſcene in ſilence, but taking hold of his hand, and looking in his face, while a tear ſtarted in her eye, "Theodore!" ſaid ſhe, "ſpeak to me.—

Why

Why are you thus?—Have I done any thing that wounds your feelings?—Tell me, that I may have an opportunity of explaining it away."

Theodore ſtood for a moment loſt in aſtoniſhment at the ſudden appearance of Auguſta, and ſtill more aſtoniſhed at the tenderneſs ſhe manifeſted.

"Am I," cried he, "in a dream!—or is it poſſible that Auguſta has a heart to feel for the ſufferings of Theodore?"

Auguſta was now covered with bluſhes, ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of the part ſhe was acting, and caſting her eyes down, endeavoured to draw away her hand that was faſt locked in his. But Theodore preſſed it to his lips, and imprinted on it a kiſs.

"Leave me," ſaid Auguſta, making a faint attempt to extricate her hand.

" No," cried Theodore; " we will dedicate a moment to love and reconciliation!"—Then, clafping her in his arms, he preffed her to his heart.

" I muft be gone," faid Augufta, withdrawing herfelf from him.

Theodore, fearful of offending, immediately relinquifhed her. " I have fo long," faid he, " laboured under your difpleafure, and felt the ill effects of it, that I dare not venture to oppofe you, left I fhould again incur it."

Augufta, although fhe had but the minute before profeffed fo great a defire to leave him, now feemed in no hurry to depart; on the contrary, fhe requefted he would attend, while fhe exculpated herfelf from the charge he had laid againft her.

Theodore heard her recital with pleafure, and apologifed for his fufpicions.

He now entreated her to walk with him down to the lodge; but this fhe refufed, alleging her father would be waiting for her at breakfaft.

"Then I will attend you home," faid Theodore.

To this Augufta alfo objected, and recapitulated the converfation made ufe of by her father on the preceding evening.

"The time muft arrive ere long," replied Theodore, "when I fhall have it in my power to remove every unfavourable fufpicion from the breaft of Sir Charles: then let St. Aubin tremble for the calumny he has thrown on my character. Till which time, Augufta, may

I be

I be permitted to hope I have obtained an intereſt in your heart?"

"How can you reconcile this converſation," ſaid Auguſta, "with your letter of laſt night? Did you not promiſe I ſhould hear no more of it?"

"You ſhould look on that letter," replied Theodore, "as the production of a mind diſtracted:—I knew not what I did."

"Well, ſir," reſumed Auguſta, "I will place the letter out of the queſtion, what reply do you think I ought to make, ſeeing my father would not approve of it, and I am totally unacquainted with your family or connections?

"Your character, I confeſs, has been cleared partly by Mr. Somers, but more particularly by a Jew in the city that Edward waited on."

"That Jew," rejoined Theodore, "is a ſcoundrel!—It is true; I ſtand indebted to him for my liberty, and I ſhould be happy to teſtify my gratitude; but I know him to be the man who tranſacts my uncle's buſineſs; they have jointly endeavoured to rob my father. There is many a thief who would plunder a houſe, and yet his nature would recoil at murder. This has been the conduct of the Jew. He was the man whom my uncle conſulted reſpecting ſending me to the coaſt of Africa, and his conſcience not being ſufficiently hardened to be guilty of ſuch a tranſaction, he was neceſſitated to adviſe my departure from the houſe, that he might be rid of the unpleaſant buſineſs."

"I think you wrong him," ſaid Auguſta; "he ſpoke of you in high terms, and I am inclined to think it was through

him

him you have been prevented this laſt time, from falling into your uncle's hands."

"That I believe," rejoined Theodore: "I do not doubt but when St. Aubin traced me, he again employed the Jew to ſend me abroad; and he has taken this plan ſooner than riſk his life or credit by following the other."

"St. Aubin!" repeated Auguſta; "is *he* your uncle?"

"I did not ſay as much," replied Theodore: "my ſtory would take up ſome time to recapitulate. If you will promiſe me your confidence, I will, at a future period, relate it to you. You will then be able to form an idea whether my addreſſes are an inſult."

"You force me to ſay a few words in my vindication," rejoined Auguſta. "If you

were a perſon whoſe fortune and connections were infinitely ſuperior to mine, I ſhould have looked upon a propoſal from you as an inſult, if I were convinced you was bound by a prior engagement; and ſuch a tale had reached my ear, but is now done away by an explanation.

"Your being the friend of Mr. Somers, and the reſpectful conduct I have met with from you, ought to have entitled you to a candid anſwer: this you would have received from me, but for the tale I had been taught to believe.

"What that candid anſwer would have conveyed, I cannot now tell you; perhaps a refuſal, delivered with my ſentiments, as reſpectful as was the propoſal.

"I mention this merely to remove from your mind the impreſſion you had received

in

in consequence of my former treatment, lest you should think it was dictated by reviewing your situation."

Theodore thanked her for this candid explanation, and Augusta, being fearful her father would be waiting for her, signified her wish to return.

Theodore attended her to the brow of the hill, and, when taking his leave, requested she would return to him the letter he had given her.

" It is written," said he, " in a style so contrary to my present feelings, and contains a promise which I am not in the least inclined to fulfil, that I should be happy if it were out of your possession."

Augusta took the letter from her pocket-book, but as she was preparing to deliver it she beheld her father, and there-

fore

fore put it up again, and wiſhed him a pleaſant walk.

Theodore obſerved Sir Charles, and, bowing reſpectfully, left her.

When Sir Charles approached, he appeared extremely angry, but did not mention any thing till he reached the breakfaſt parlour.

"After the converſation," ſaid he, "that paſſed between us laſt night, I did not expect to find you in the act of encouraging the addreſſes of a fellow who may be a notorious ſwindler, or worſe, for any thing you or I know to the contrary. I obſerved you accept a letter from him; give it to me."

Auguſta took it from her pocket-book, but heſitated in delivering it.

"What!—the ſeal is broke!" ſaid he: "you have read it!—I ſuppoſe it

contains

contains a propofal you ought not to attend to?"

"I do not wifh to attend to it," replied Augufta.

"I'll not read it," refumed Sir Charles, "as the contents would no doubt aggravate my feelings; you fhall fend it back." Then taking pen, ink, and paper, and placing them before her, "Come," faid he, "write as I dictate."

"Will not this be improper," faid Augufta, "for me to write to him?"

"Aye, I fee how it is!" cried Sir Charles: "there would be no objection raifed if you had the dictating it. But, come, do as I defire you; I infift upon it."

Augufta obeyed.

"Now write," faid Sir Charles, "what I tell you."

He then repeated as follows:

'SIR,

'I have neither wiſh nor inclination to 'keep the incloſed; and you would ma'terially oblige me by not writing or re'peating to me a ſubject which will ever 'be diſagreeable. I cannot return your 'letter without teſtifying my ſurpriſe at 'the contents; as I am not aware of any 'impropriety of conduct on my part that 'could warrant ſuch a procedure in you. 'Reſting ſatisfied you will not wound my 'feelings by a repetition, I remain,

'SIR,

'Your moſt obedient,

'AUGUSTA FREEMAN.'

"There," cried Sir Charles; "now fold his letter in it, and direct it for 'Theodore Somers.'"

Augusta, having fulfilled the order of Sir Charles, he sealed it; and ringing for a servant, Augusta desired him to convey it to Theodore, but not to wait for an answer.

Augusta could not help smiling at the singularity of this circumstance.

"What is it that provokes your mirth?" said Sir Charles.

"Oh, nothing," replied Augusta: "I was merely thinking how mortified and vexed he will be on the receipt of his letter back."

"It is just what he deserves," resumed Sir Charles. "Indeed I wonder at his assurance in troubling you with it; but I will answer for it, unless I had detected it, you would not have sent it back to him."

"You may believe me," rejoined Au-

gusta, "it is what I intended to do the first opportunity. I should have been averse to taking it, had I suspected what it contained; but from his former conduct I could have no such idea, and nothing could give me greater pleasure than by obliging you in this particular."

"Well, well," resumed Sir Charles, "I hope it does; I think you would not make such an asseveration if it did not."

They now sat down to breakfast, and before they had finished the servant returned.

"Did you deliver the letter into his own hands?" said Sir Charles.

The servant replied in the affirmative.

"And was not the young gentleman rather displeased with the contents?" resumed Sir Charles.

"He

"He blushed," replied the man, "but did not appear displeased; for he turned to Mr. Somers, and with a smile told him, 'it was what he expected.'"

The servant now left the room.

"You see," continued Sir Charles, "the fellow will not break his heart for the loss of you; the letter did not give him a moment of uneasiness."

"I did not expect it would," replied Augusta.

"No, no," rejoined Sir Charles; "he only wanted to graft his poverty upon my family; but I hope you are now convinced."

"Perfectly," replied Augusta: "the evident pleasure he betrayed on the receipt of it, is sufficient of itself to convince me that I shall never again be ob-

 liged

liged to liſten to ſo diſagreeable a ſubject."

"I ſhould indeed be ſorry," reſumed Sir Charles, "to deprive you of viſiting Mr. Somers on his account, but, after what has paſſed, I think I can truſt you there with ſafety."

Auguſta thanked him, and aſſured him he might rely on her diſcretion.

She could not help reflecting with pleaſure on the ſingular manner her wiſhes had been forwarded: Sir Charles had compelled her to acknowledge her ſentiments to Theodore.

If ſhe had any reaſon for regret, it proceeded from a fear leſt he ſhould imagine ſhe had gone too far; but this ſhe had in her power to rectify by explaining the circumſtance to Mr. Somers, and for this intent ſhe determined on

taking

taking the first opportunity of feeing him; she therefore requested her father would permit her to spend part of the day at the lodge; to which request he readily assented.

CHAP XII.

WHEN Augusta reached the house, she found Somers and Theodore in conversation, but upon her entering the room, Somers requested Theodore to retire, as he wished to have a few minutes' conversation with Augusta alone.

Theodore complied.

" And now, Miss Freeman," said Somers, " I have a circumstance to relate, that probably has not come to your knowledge.

" In consequence of the evident misunderstanding that existed between you and Theodore, and likewise in conse-

quence

ence of his solemn asseveration that he would not again renew his addresses, I ventured to promise Sir Charles that you would visit this place without being troubled with his company, unless Sir Charles should feel inclined to alter his sentiments respecting him.

"Upon this promise your father relies; and this I hope will plead my excuse for desiring him to withdraw.

"I am, notwithstanding, firmly of opinion that the address of Theodore would reflect no disgrace on your family; and he likewise, at my earnest entreaty, shewed me the letter you sent this morning, and explained the conversation you had with him.

"I am therefore in an unpleasant situation; obliged to exert every endeavour to keep him from your society at a time

that I am confident you both have a unalterable attachment for each other; you will therefore oblige me by stating what plan I ought to pursue."

Augusta replied by relating the circumstance of the letter, which forced a smile into his countenance; and rising from his chair, desired a servant would acquaint Theodore he wished to speak with him.

Theodore attended.

"Oblige me with the letter," said Somers, "that you received this morning; I positively must have it, as it releases me from my promise to Sir Charles."

Augusta having joined in the request, Theodore delivered it.

"If the old gentleman," resumed Somers, "will thus make love for his daughter, he must take the consequences.

I will

I will keep the letter, left he should discover the friendly footing you are upon: and then I shall take the liberty of shewing it to him; it will give him a high idea of his profound penetration: at the same time I rest perfectly satisfied in encouraging an acquaintance between you, from the high opinion I form of Theodore, and the corroborative proofs I have received of his testimony."

Somers shortly after having occasion to leave them, and Mrs. Somers being engaged, Theodore requested if she was at leisure to hear his story which he had promised to relate.

"I cannot now attend to any thing concerning it," replied Augusta; "and you will confer a singular obligation in not making me acquainted with it, as I am confident if Sir Charles were to recapitulate

pitulate his ſuſpicion of you, I ſhould not be able to withhold the knowledge of it from him."

But this was not Auguſta's real motive: ſhe was fearful of loſing the good opinion of Theodore. She knew that Somers had not preſſed him on the ſubject; ſhe likewiſe recollected he had not offered to acquaint her with his family or connections, till ſhe had thrown out an unfavourable ſuſpicion concerning him. Her attending to it, therefore, would ſtrongly mark her want of confidence, and muſt ſerve to leſſen her in his eſtimation.

Another, and a ſtill more powerful reaſon was, that it would appear as if it were a matter of conſequence to her in particular, and afford Theodore grounds to ſuppoſe ſhe was intereſted in the recital.

Theodore

Theodore entreated ſhe would hear him.

Auguſta replied that ſhe had made up her mind. "I ſhall be proud," continued ſhe, "to place you amongſt the number of my friends; and if you were to acquaint me with who you are, I could do no more, while my father thinks proper to diſapprove."

Theodore, upon this poſitive denial, permitted the ſecret to remain within his own breaſt; but endeavoured to improve every moment he was in her company by expreſſing the ſtrength of his attachment, wiſhing, if poſſible, to acquire an anſwer from her that would gratify his feelings, and give eaſe to his heart; but Auguſta evaded his queſtions.

Mrs. Somers now made her appearance, and teſtified the pleaſure ſhe received on ſeeing her at the lodge. Shortly after,

Somers

Somers likewife entered, and the converfation became general. While they were thus engaged, Sir Charles, without fending in his name, walked into the room. The firft object that attracted his notice, was Theodore fitting on a chair next to his daughter.

Theodore rofe on his entrance, and, bowing refpectfully, left the apartment.

Sir Charles then turning to Somers, " How am I to account for this?" faid he: " I relied on your promife that you would not permit my daughter to be infulted with that fellow's company, and this is the way you keep your word."

" When I gave you my promife," replied Somers, " I conceived that each party had pre-determined not to renew their acquaintance; and therefore concluded it would require no trouble on my

my part, and that I ſhould not be called upon to wound my own feelings by fulfilling it.

"Excluſive of this, my promiſe was given conditionally, and was no longer binding upon me when you ſhould think proper to alter your mind, and although you might not intend to promote their acquaintance by dictating a letter this morning, yet it has had that effect, and ought to plead an excuſe for me, who am ready to take every advantage where the happineſs of an individual is at ſtake."

"I do not perfectly underſtand you," replied Sir Charles, "and ſhall therefore take it as a favour if you will oblige me with an explanation."

Somers produced the letters. "Here is a letter," ſaid he, "from Theodore,

promiſing

promiſing not to offend her for the future with his company or addreſſes.

"This letter you compelled your daughter to ſend back, requeſting him not to repeat ſo diſagreeable a ſubject, and declaring ſhe was not conſcious of having merited ſuch a conduct from him."

"Let me ſee them," rejoined Sir Charles.

"Aye," continued he, "I ſee I have been fairly outwitted; but it ſhall be the laſt time they ſhall ever be together.

"I can find an excuſe for your conduct on account of the high opinion you entertain of him; but you cannot eſtimate my feelings, and therefore muſt make allowances for me, if I take effectual means to prevent a repetition of this."

Somers endeavoured to ſoften his reſentment,

fentment, but Sir Charles was inflexible. "I am going a little way on fome bu-finefs," faid he, addreffing himfelf to Augufta, "and fhall call for you on my return."

Somers attended him to the gate:— "You look on this bufinefs," faid he, "in too ferious a light; you may rely on the difcretion of Augufta; fhe will not give him any encouragement till he is able, by declaring himfelf, to gain your fanction."

"Yes, yes, fhe is very difcreet," re-joined Sir Charles, "and has certainly outwitted me. I have no doubt but you have been enjoying a laugh at my ex-pence: fhe will have no caufe in future to call my penetration in queftion."

Sir Charles now purfued his way home, having determined on the plan he in-tended

tended to purfue the moment he difcovered them together, and was confiderably ftrengthened in his refolution, when he found the ridiculous office he had fulfilled by fending back the letter.

He could eafily pardon himfelf for the error he committed, but could find no excufe for Augufta or Somers, who, he confidered, ought to have informed him of it.

When he reached his houfe, he fearched for and found the hand-bill, which offered a hundred pounds reward for the apprehenfion of Theodore; and being a magiftrate, he immediately ordered the attendance of two conftables, who he took with him to the lodge.

Augufta was in the garden, in converfation with Mrs. Somers, when fhe beheld her father approaching with the

two men. It immediately occurring to her the bufinefs he was upon, fhe haften-ed to the houfe for the purpofe of apprif-ing Theodore.

She had fcarcely time to relate her fears, before Sir Charles and the two men made their appearance.

Sir Charles ordered them to feize The-odore, and confine him in his houfe till they fhould receive further inftructions.

"Hold!" cried Somers; "firft let me know the meaning of this outrage."

"My conduct is ftrictly legal," replied Sir Charles; "I have an undoubted au-thority to apprehend any man who paffes under a borrowed name, and who can give no account of himfelf. But, waving that plea, here is a bill offering a reward for his apprehenfion. Can I, therefore, confiftent with my duty as a magiftrate, fuffer

fuffer him to remain at large?—It is poffible, had he not attempted to do me a ferious injury, that I might have winked on it, and, for the refpect I had for you, have permitted him to remain unmolefted; but you have forfeited my friendfhip by encouraging him to proceed in a matter that I ftrictly forbid."

"It feems, then," rejoined Somers, "you make ufe of your authority for the purpofe of gratifying a private refentment; this, you muft allow, is degrading to a magiftrate; and fo far does it leffen you in my eftimation, that I cannot help adding, this is the firft inftance I ever met with, where a juftice of the peace, in fulfilling his office, forgot to adopt the manners and conduct of a gentleman.

"Theodore is under my protection, and I will be anfwerable for his conduct.

You

You would act wisely by sending the men away, as I shall not submit to his being taken from my house."

"If Sir Charles," said Theodore, "will have the goodness to retire with me, I will so far explain myself, as to shew him the impropriety of this step."

"I want no explanation from you," cried Sir Charles: "I have not been a magistrate so many years, but I must be aware of the shuffling pretences made use of by vagabonds to avoid justice." He then again repeated his order that the men would seize him.

The men obeyed.

"I am not one of those," said Somers, "who can plead a justification for opposing the civil power; but when a magistrate, for the professed purpose of satisfying a private pique, will wantonly devote

vote an individual to destruction, as I conceive is the case in the present instance, it does become me to prevent it, and I will take the consequences on myself."

"Let me see," cried Sir Charles, "who it is that dares to molest a magistrate in the exercise of his duty?"

"Theodore," said Somers, "has been given up to his relations since the handbill was published, therefore I consider it of no effect." He then rung the bell: "Desire," said he, "every man servant I have to come here this instant."

The various servants entered.

"Now," continued Somers, "take those two men (pointing to the constables), and convey them to the outside of my gate."

A scuffle ensued: Sir Charles was outrageous,

geous, and aſſiſted the conſtables, who ſtill refuſed to relinquiſh Theodore.

During this ſcene of confuſion a maid ſervant entered, and informed them Lord St. Aubin wiſhed to ſpeak with Mr. Somers.

" Heavens!" cried Theodore, " my father." In an inſtant Lord St. Aubin, who was anxious to behold his ſon, entered, followed by Lady St. Aubin, Sir William Leſley, Clariſſa, and the two Freemans.

" Which is Theodore Somers?" cried his lordſhip.

" Where is Frederick St. Aubin, my ſon?" exclaimed her ladyſhip.

" Villains! unhand me!" cried Theodore; and exerting his utmoſt ſtrength, extricated himſelf, and flew to the arms

of

of his mother, who nearly fainted through excefs of joy.

Lord St. Aubin was highly enraged at the fituation in which he beheld his fon when he entered, and feizing one of the men by the collar, "By what authority," cried he, "did you dare to lay a finger on that young gentleman?"

Somers interpofed, and affured him the men were innocent; "They acted," faid he, "confiftent with orders they received from a magiftrate; here has been a miftake, every thing will now be rectified."

Sir William likewife interpofed, and his lordfhip was prevailed upon to relinquifh his hold.

Sir Charles then defired the conftables to quit the room.

Theodore now threw himfelf into the

arms

arms of his father, who preſt him to his heart, while the tears of joy that ſtarted in his eyes teſtified the feelings of a parent.

Every one now ſpoke together; all was a ſcene of confuſed joy; in which each partook excepting Sir Charles, who felt aſhamed of the part he had been acting.

"Let me know," ſaid Lord St. Aubin, "at whoſe inſtigation my ſon was being dragged like a common felon, that I may thank him as I ought."

Somers again interpoſed, and aſſured him there had been an error.

Lord St. Aubin turned to Theodore, and repeated his enquiry.

Theodore, who did not wiſh to create a miſunderſtanding between his father and Sir Charles, heſitated.

Sir Charles came forward, and attempted an apology, pleading in excufe the leading circumftances that had prompted him fo to act.

"I have heard," rejoined his lordfhip, "of my fon's attachment to your daughter; but, if he will follow my advice, he will recollect the indignant treatment he has met with, and no longer court the honour of an alliance with your family."

Sir Charles confidered this expreffion as an infult, and therefore replied, "the family of St. Aubin would not be difgraced by fuch an alliance, which he was as little defirous of promoting as his lordfhip."

Theodore interfered. "Permit me, my father," faid he, "as the firft requeft I ever had the power to make, that you

will

will not embitter the pleafure this meeting affords me by any recrimination.

"Sir Charles knew not who I was; I appeared to him in the light of an adventurer who infulted his family. If you continue this argument, words will pafs on both fides that cannot be recalled, the confequence of which will prove fatal to my happinefs."

Lord St. Aubin, anxious to oblige his fon, turned to Sir Charles, and afked him if he could excufe the hafty words of a parent.

"Undoubtedly," replied Sir Charles; "and when you confider me in the fame light, I am confident you will excufe my conduct, and what has fallen from my lips."

Lord St. Aubin now approached him, and requefted what was paffed might be configned to oblivion.

Sir Charles readily aſſented: and then turning to Somers, "Mr. Somers," ſaid he, "I ſhall for the future have a high opinion of your judgment."

Somers thanked him: "I was confident," ſaid he, "my young friend had not deceived me."

"Is this Mr. Somers?" ſaid his lordſhip.

Somers bowed an aſſent.

"Mr. Somers," continued his lordſhip, "I reverence your virtue and benevolence; accept the effuſions of a heart overflowing with gratitude; you have, conjointly with others, by protecting my ſon, preſerved the life of his father."

"I ſincerely thank your lordſhip for your good opinion," replied Somers. "Be aſſured, the happineſs I received in the ſociety of your ſon, whoſe amiable diſpoſition

difpofition is infinitely above what I have abilities to relate, has amply repaid me for the trifling affiftance I rendered. You will therefore materially oblige me by faying nothing further on the fubject. Then turning to Clariffa, who he now for the firft time difcovered, "Is it poffible," cried he, "that I have once more the pleafure of beholding you under my roof! You may now accept of my protection without fearing the cenfure of the world; Heaven has reftored my Louifa to me: Mrs. Somers will be proud of your fociety, and you will in fome meafure compenfate for the lofs I fhall fuftain by being deprived of Theodore."

"My dear friend," faid Clariffa, taking his hand, "I know not how I fhall find words to relate the joyful occurrence that has taken place fince laft we were to-

gether. I have gained a protector in Sir William Lesley, my father."

Clarissa was proceeding to thank him for his offer, but Somers stood lost in astonishment.

Freeman came forward and explained; after which Sir William approached, and with the affection of a friend, prompted by the feelings of a parent, thanked him for the kindness he had manifested to his daughter.

"Oblige me," cried Somers, interrupting him, "by saying nothing further on the subject. But permit me to congratulate you both on this happy and unexpected event."

Somers next introduced Mrs. Somers, and afterwards Augusta; she was but in a plain morning dress, yet was her beauty sufficiently conspicuous, and more

particularly

particularly at this time, as it was heightened by the modeſt bluſh occaſioned by the uncommon attention paid her by his lordſhip, who came forward, and taking her hand, "Frederick," ſaid he, "you ought to rejoice in your misfortunes, ſince it has thus conducted you to happineſs. So truly amiable does this young lady appear, that I am neceſſitated to become a ſuitor in your behalf to Sir Charles, and ſhould he agree to my requeſt, I ſhall have found two children inſtead of one, as I already feel a parent's affection for her."

"I ſhall certainly," rejoined Sir Charles, "endeavour to promote the happineſs of all parties, at leaſt as far as my conſent will be the means; but I cannot anſwer for Auguſta.

"Frederick muſt ſpeak with her concerning it.

"And now, Edward," continued he, turning to his nephew, "permit me to congratulate you on having found Clariſſa, for whoſe ſafety you appeared ſo anxious. If I may judge from the pleaſure there appears in your countenance, her having diſcovered a father is not a barrier to your happineſs; and if ſo, I ſhall be the firſt to rejoice in it."

"I aſſure you," rejoined Sir William, "ſo far from being a barrier, I ſhall be both proud and happy in promoting it; confident that by ſo doing, I ſtudy the future welfare and felicity of my daughter."

Somers now requeſted their company to dinner, which invitation they accepted.

After

After they had dined, Augufta, who wifhed to have fome converfation with Clariffa, drew her from the company and ftrolled into the garden.

They had not been gone more than a quarter of an hour before Theodore and Edward followed.

Lord St. Aubin, who had vifited Cliff-down lodge for the purpofe of claiming his fon, and who had material bufinefs that would require his attention fhortly in London, thought this would be a favourable opportunity of expediting Frederick's wifhes relative to Augufta, and therefore obferved to Sir Charles, that as there appeared to be an unity of fentiment between their children, they could not too foon fettle the terms on which their happinefs was to be completed.

Sir Charles replied, by ſtating the fortune he ſhould beſtow on Auguſta, and the jointure he ſhould expect her to have in return.

Somers, thinking his company would be an intruſion, apologiſed for leaving them, and went in purſuit of the abſent party.

He ſhortly diſcovered Theodore and Auguſta ſeated by themſelves in an alcove.

Theodore called to him: "Mr. Somers," ſaid he, "I muſt treſpaſs further on your generoſity, by requeſting you will plead with Miſs Freeman in my behalf; I cannot prevail on her to favour me with a definitive anſwer."

"How is this?" ſaid Somers, addreſſing himſelf to Auguſta; "have you forgot

eful leſſon I once taught you,
w and fleeting are the moments allotted for happineſ[illegible] this life,' &c.; but if you have, I ſtill remember what you once informed me reſpecting your ſentiments of Theodore, and, to ſave you from the trouble of confeſſion, I will rehearſe it.

"Mr. Somers," rejoined Auguſta, "you ſhould not betray the confidence I repoſed in you."

"Perhaps," reſumed Somers, "you conceive the moments of courtſhip ſo pleaſant, they ought to be extended to their utmoſt limits; but, rely upon my word, when Theodore takes upon himſelf the character of a huſband, he will not forget the lover; his affection, being firmly rooted, will always continue the

 ſame:

ſame: therefore, upon my at on, oblige him with a ſwer."

Freeman and Clariſſa joining them at this time, and having heard a part of what had fallen from the lips of Somers, "How ſingular is this!" ſaid Freeman; "my couſin was nearly expiring in the abſence of Theodore, and now he courts her acceptance, ſhe appears to decline the offer; but I will ſoon ſettle this difficult buſineſs." Then taking her hand, and placing it in Theodore's, "Let me now ſee," continued he, "if you have the cruelty to withdraw it."

Theodore preſſed her hand, which preſſure Auguſta returned.

"If I were ever ſo inclined to recede," ſaid ſhe, "I find it would be impoſſible,

and therefore muft fubmit to imperious neceffity."

"To the dictates of your heart," rejoined Freeman; "a heart which, you have frequently declared, glows with an animated affection for him."

"To this affection," rejoined Clariffa, "I can bear teftimony."

"Theodore," faid Augafta, "I muft really fly to you for protection, as they, by betraying my confidence, produce a blufh upon my cheek; therefore, to end the difpute, think what you would have me to fay, and conclude it uttered."

Theodore now clafped her in his arms, while his eyes teftified the complete happinefs he enjoyed.

At this juncture, Lord St. Aubin and Sir Charles approached.

"I have," faid Freeman, addreffing himfelf

himself to Sir Charles, "been prevailing with Augusta to accept the hand of Theodore."

"I am of opinion," rejoined Sir Charles, "you did not find it an arduous undertaking. It has, however, relieved me from the necessity of investigating her sentiments, and therefore, as his lordship has agreed with me concerning the preliminaries, I shall complete their happiness." Then taking the hand of Augusta, presented her to Theodore, at the same time assuring him, the pleasure it afforded was more than he could find words to express.

Lord St. Aubin, who had witnessed this scene, proposed, as he had almost an immediate occasion to visit London, that the ceremony should be performed at the expiration of two days; and, as

Augusta

Augusta made no reply, Sir Charles gave it his hearty concurrence.

Shortly after adjourning to the house, they acquainted Sir William of their determination; who, in return, at the instigation of Somers, proposed the same day for surrendering Clarissa to Edward.

When the evening approached, Sir Charles invited his brother and nephew, together with Sir William and his daughter, to his house; requesting they would take up their residence with him during their stay in the country; and Somers entreated Lord and Lady St. Aubin to remain at Cliffdown-lodge, in company with their son.

On the following day Sir Thomas and Lady Blandford arrived, in company with Mr. Bridport, who had entered on the

the living beftowed on him by Sir Charles.

Somers expreffed his pleafure on their arrival, and introduced Theodore to Sir Thomas in his real character.

The period having approached that was to put Theodore in poffeffion of Augufta, and Edward in the poffeffion of Clariffa, Mr. Bridport was called upon to perform the facred office.

Lord and Lady St. Aubin remained with Somers for two or three days, and, at the requeft of Sir Charles, confented that Theodore and Augufta fhould refide with him for a few weeks.

Having taken an affectionate leave of Somers, his lordfhip with Lady St. Aubin returned to London.

Sir William Lefley attended the elder Freeman

house, in company with ... Edward.

... Thomas took leave of Somers; but recollecting the fate of Mrs. Bentley, he ordered a tomb to be erected over her grave; a mark of respect, which served more as a monument that reminded him of his folly, than to perpetuate the memory of the almost unknown character over whom it was raised.

Mrs. Sternhold, in company with her husband, paid a visit to Somers, and felt more pleasure in her reconciliation than it was possible she could enjoy by perpetuating her inveteracy.

Morris, who had acted upon the principle suggested by Lord St. Aubin, and who had informed Sir William his daughter was dead, thinking thereby that his conduct would escape investigation, and that

that he should be able ... friendship, which he stood m... of, having heard Sir William had ... vered Clarissa, never after made his appearance.

Mr. St. Aubin delivered a fair statement to his lordship of all the monies he had received, and accounted with him to a fraction.

Lord St. Aubin forgave his past conduct, and invited him to his house; yet such was the shame St. Aubin endured, arising from conscious guilt, that not all the entreaties of his brother could prevail on him to accept the invitation.

Isaac Solomon refused any gratuity for the services he had rendered to Theodore.

Lord St. Aubin made use of every entreaty,

treaty, and declared, that as he had lost so valuable an employer as Mr. St. Aubin, he ought in return to accept of some compensation in lieu of it.

To which the Jew replied, that he had merely courted the custom and connection of St. Aubin as it afforded him an opportunity of serving his lordship; that having now no further occasion so to do, he should have relinquished his employ had it not been withdrawn from him; and therefore his lordship was by no means indebted for the loss he sustained.

Theodore made every apology to the Jew for the unworthy suspicions he entertained of him, and explained the causes from whence those suspicions arose.

The Jew declared there was no occafion for an apology, as his conjecture was the natural refult of the practice he daily witneffed.

Theodore in return prefented him with a ring, in token of the high eftimation in which he held him, and the grateful remembrance he fhould ever retain of his fervices.

Having thus prefented Theodore to his parents, and Clariffa to her father, and feen them happily united to the objects of their choice:—

Having brought Sir Thomas to a fenfe of his duty, and conducted him to her who alone could render him happy:—

And having alfo reftored the woe-worn Somers to that felicity he languifhed for, but which he had been fo unjuftly deprived

ved of :—I ſhall leave them to the en-
ment of that domeſtic comfort, to
ich I think them ſo eminently en-
ed.

FINIS.

Davison,
[illegible]